



**The effects of Analytical Marketing as a support to the decision making process: the Case of Yves Rocher**

by

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## **Biography**

João José Lourenço Marinho was born in Viana do Castelo, on the 13th of June, 1992. He lived in his hometown until 2010, year when he initiated his Bachelor (BSc) degree in Economics at the School Economics and Management of the University of Porto (FEP), that was completed in June 2014 with a final average of thirteen (13) points out of twenty (20). During this period he lived several experiences within the local committee of AIESEC, the biggest world organization run by students. In September of 2014 he continued his studies in the Master in Management also held at FEP. In the first year, he finished the curricular part of the course, with an average of sixteen (16) points out of twenty (20). He continued to take new experiences with AIESEC. During the first semester of the second year of the master he also worked at Yves Rocher doing a curricular internship at the company.

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## **Abstract**

Marketing analytics as a high-growing marketing field in the last years is becoming ever more important to top management teams within firms all around the world when deciding about marketing strategies for their companies. As so, its findings end-up influencing top management's decision making process. There is literature on this subject that presents effects on the decision making process of top deciders. There is however other effects that can be recognized to marketing analytics which are not referred.

The objective of the current work is to complement the analysis of those effects resulting from deploying marketing analytics techniques within firms on the decision making process of their top deciders.

Our approach to the topic of study was through a case study at Yves Rocher Portugal, by analyzing the process of implementation of marketing analytics in its descriptive analytics form at Yves Rocher Portugal. This study intends to unveil the improvements obtained in the firm's top management decision making process derived from the application of such practices. For the purpose, the data collection methods of participant observation, direct observation and interview were deployed being the main one interviews that were conducted with the decision makers of the company, the people that saw their work affected by the project outputs.

The effects stated within the literature were confirmed which mainly concerned the improvement of the decision making process quality. We also found two new effects with this study since it has possible to conclude that marketing analytics not only assists top deciders when thinking about new strategies, but it also enables them to construct there subjective component of their decision making process, the experience.

We believe that the findings of this study can become a critical point to managers since the effects found from the deployment of marketing analytics techniques are passible of having a positive impact for companies all over the world, helping develop the quality of the decisions made, emerging as a competitive advantage enhancer,

**Key-words:** Marketing Analytics, Marketing Strategy, Data Mining, Descriptive Analysis, Decision Making Process

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Motivations**

This study started based on the project proposed by Yves Rocher Portugal which aimed to study the influence in its sales that several marketing criteria for the construction of catalogues have had throughout time.

In the present century, it is important for companies to gain competitive advantage within their markets (Shaw et al., 2001). One of the ways of achieving that competitive advantage is by developing their one-to-one relationship with their customers, which will enable them not only to acquire new ones but also to keep the most profitable ones, a process where marketing analytics provided with a wealth of data from their customers can help (Hauser, 2007). Yves Rocher Portugal, recognising this importance of marketing analytics techniques and tools usage to improve and exploit customer relationships (Phan and Vogel, 2009) towards gaining competitive advantage, aimed through this project to obtain insights on the criteria that affect their customers buying decisions when looking at their catalogues, insights that therefore will assume itself as a support to the Yves Rocher Portugal top deciders' decision making process concerning the building of its sales instrument, its catalogues.

As a result, it is our intent to study the impacts that this analysis has in the Yves Rocher Portugal's top deciders' decision making process, adding with this study new knowledge on the topic to the existing literature.

## **1.2 Context of the study**

Marketing analytics can be well defined as a technology-enabled and model-supported approach to harness customer and market data to enhance marketing decision making (Lilien, 2011). The effects of a correct application of marketing analytics in companies are known and well-studied overtime, being demonstrated the objective effects such as the impact in sales and profits and documented the benefits of deploying Marketing Analytics in the overall decision making process (Germann et al., 2012). Nevertheless,

there are still many companies that either don't apply at all or don't effectively apply marketing analytics techniques. Based on an ANA (Association of National Advertisers) survey exploring how marketers are responding to disruptions in the market place, an analysis from McKinsey & Co. supports that despite the increasing number of deciders that already use analysed data to support their marketing decisions (46%) (McKinsey & Co., 2015), an increase compared to the 10% in 2009 that would regularly deploy marketing analytics (McKinsey & Co., 2009), only 10% are efficiently using those insights to improve their firms' performance. This arises from the fact that it's not uncommon for teams to outsource those analysis leading to a high level of reluctance to implement its findings do to an incomplete understanding of the information and poor trust in the numbers presented (McKinsey & Co., 2014).

There is however a strong misconception about marketing analytics when many think of it as nothing more than technology and databases (Hauser, 2007). In fact, marketing analytics can be strongly correlated with database marketing which is a "database-oriented process that explores database information in order to support marketing activities and/or decisions" (Marques et al., 2009, pp. 76) presuming not only the collection and treatment of data, but the very necessary interpretation of that data (Hauser, 2007). This interpreted data can have a crucial importance on the decision making process of top deciders.

Being the decision making process normally associated to an intuitive process (Zsombok and Klein, 1997), it can simultaneously be associated to common sense and not considered an analytical process. Nevertheless, there is strong evidence that a stronger understanding of data and its underlying patterns, results in more consistent and accurate decisions consequently improving the decision making process as a whole (Hair Jr, 2007). Subsequently, and having in mind that marketing analytics by providing the better comprehension of marketing related data also increases the top deciders decisions consistency (Hartnett, 2015), and considering the fact that organisations nowadays are competing on analytics (Davenport, 2006), it is apparent the existing link between deploying marketing analytics and the improvement of the top deciders decision making process, a link that we intend to study as a result of the referred project developed at Yves Rocher Portugal.

### **1.3 Research Question and Objectives of the study**

In sum, the aim of this study is to conclude on the effects of deploying marketing analytics as a support in the Yves Rocher Portugal's top management decision process, presenting a new view over the marketing analytics benefits to companies, by answering to the following research question:

– What are the effects of applying Marketing Analytics practices as a support for the Top Management decision process?

We aim to answer to the research question through the analysis of the case study at Yves Rocher Portugal. As methods to gather data on the subject we will use documentation, participant observation, direct observation and interviews. The first three methods represent secondary data gathering methods, being the interview the main data collection method used in the study. With the deployment of interviews to the company's top deciders based on the conclusions of the study made about the influence of some marketing criteria on the catalogue's sales we aim to discover if the conclusions of the study were used and the effects that those conclusions had in the company's top deciders.

### **1.4 Structure**

The study follows the following structure. We start by making a literature review of the topic, presenting the key definitions and theories on the topic, which will help us understand the topic at hand. Afterwards, we will present the methodology used to perform the study. Within this section we will make a presentation of the company Yves Rocher, the project deployed there and the stages that compose our case study. We will also present the data collection phases and the process of data treatment. Thirdly, we will present the results that were got from the study. With those results, we will then present the conclusions of the study, going through the contribution of the study, its limitations and presenting our thoughts on future research for the topic.

## **2. Literature Review**

As a starting point for the study, we will do a literature review with the aim of defining several key-concepts and theories that allowed us to define the aim of study. Consequently, the concepts are presented on a progressive perspective leading us a step closer to the research question, at each new aspect of the study that it is presented.

### **2.1 Marketing Analytics**

The first concept that it is important to define for the purpose of the study is the concept of marketing analytics, since the objective of the study is to understand its effects in the top management decision making process. In order to provide a better and continuous understanding of the definition of marketing analytics, we will first start by presenting the concept of marketing information system, also covering the concept of marketing and a crucial definition concerning marketing strategy - the idea of the 4 Ps of marketing or marketing mix - an idea that will be crucial when describing the case study deployed. The definition of marketing information system will lead us to the necessity that marketing has for concrete and clear data analysis processes that will enhance the marketing top deciders' decision making quality. For that reason we will secondly present two different views on data analysis, concretely data mining and analytics, notions that will help us make the path from the previous definition of marketing and the concept of marketing analytics which will be presented lastly, the technique of analyzing data which is very correlated with the tool within marketing for collecting and analyzing data – marketing information system.

#### **2.1.1 Marketing Information System**

A marketing information system can be well defined as an organized, interacting complex of machines, individuals and processes created with the purpose of generating an logical flow of relevant information gathered both inside and outside the company, information that will serve as support to marketing's top deciders decision making within the areas of marketing management. (Brien and Stanford, 1968). This notion of marketing

information system as being represented by machines, process and people that collect, treat and analyze data is also referred by Barakat et al. (2016). Leonidou and Theodosiou (2004) present the three basic components in a marketing information system. The first one comprises the background factors such as the environment and organization that impact the marketing managers' information behavior. The second one encompasses the processing conduct within the organization concerning the determination, acquisition, dissemination and utilization of the information. As for the third one, it involves the part that information activities have when designing the companies' competitive advantage, a role that can then be used to improve marketing performance. Having in mind the purpose of the study of identifying effects of marketing analytics in the decision making of top deciders, we see that this is a very important notion since the clear importance given to data on a marketing information system lead us to the very necessary definition of marketing analytics, an area that, as we will mention, is very concerned with the analysis and interpretation of marketing data. Ali and Rao (2016) define the role of marketing information system as to compile all the marketing information together in order to turn it into a coherent set of information, which will effect decision making by enabling the saving of time. Barakat et al. (2016) also presented marketing information system as the key tool, one that can reduce the lack of trust when making marketing strategic decisions.

Now that we have defined marketing information system, it's crucial that we firstly understand the concept of marketing, since this is the business area where marketing information system as a tool and marketing analytics as a technique are applied, which can be understand as "managing profitable customer relationships" (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012, pp. 28). This conception about the marketing concept is widely accepted for long, has is possible to see in McNamara (1972) that defines the marketing concept as a thought about business management which is based on an all-around company acceptance of its need for focus on both customers and profits and the acknowledgment of the marketing importance in analyzing and communicating the market needs to all the main corporate departments. Several other authors have also defined the concept of marketing with this focus on customers and profits, like McCarthy and Perreault (1984) that presents marketing concept meaning that the aim of organizations is, on all its efforts, to satisfy its clients' needs at a certain profit and like Kotler and Zaltman (1971) that focus

the marketing concept on the searching for the customer needs and on the creation of the goods and services that will enable them to satisfy them. Ambers and Roberts (2008) refer to marketing as to what the whole firm does in order to satisfy its customers' needs and wants, creating therefore shareholder value.

In the recent years, the understanding of the marketing concept has been similar but we have seen a change in the thought of marketing as a function to a view of marketing as an activity, one that is universal within companies (Wymbs, 2011). This change of perspective is clearly visible in the new definition giving by AMA (American Marketing Association) in 2007 where marketing is defined as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large" (Harrigan and Hulbert, 2011). Leeflang and Wittink (2000) had also addressed a new marketing view proposal based in the customer needs analytics, making the whole marketing consisting on the customer preferences which would be measured on an ongoing basis.

When talking about marketing, we must concern the concept of marketing strategy. Varadarajan (2010) widely defines marketing strategy as the firm's incorporated pattern of decisions leading to important choices in terms of markets, products and marketing activities and resources in generating, communicating and supplying products that offer value to customers dealing with the organizations enable companies to achieve their goals. Oxenfeldt (1962) divided marketing strategy in two parts: defining the markets to target and composing the marketing mix. Varadarajan (2010) also noted the existence of certain sources that describe the 4 Ps as marketing strategy of a firm. The importance of a clear and well-defined marketing strategy for business success is presented by Shaw (2012).

Within the concept of marketing strategy, we find the concept of the 4 Ps of marketing. We can also refer to them as the marketing mix which Kotler and Armstrong (2012) present it as a group of tactical marketing tools – product, price, place and promotion – that the company can impact and change in order to create the response that it wants from the target market by influencing the demand of its products. The product tool refers to the combination of the company's goods and services offer. The price tool is the amount of money that the company's customers have to pay in order to obtain the product. The place

tool states the company's activities that enable its products to be available to consumers. Finally, the promotion tool raises awareness on the company's activities that communicate the qualities of its products and that may influence the customers' desire to buy the products. The marketing mix tools can be used to either develop long-term plans and short-term tactical programs (Palmer, 2004).

Understanding the notion 4 Ps of marketing or marketing mix, we can think of them as the marketing strategy decisions that a company needs to make. As seen before when talking about marketing information system, the marketing strategy of a company will have a great need of information, arising here the need to encounter data analysis practices that will enable companies to treat and analyze the collected data. We will next present two different methods that companies can adopt when analyzing their collected data.

### **2.1.2 Data Analytics**

As said before, we will now present the definitions of data mining and analytics which will help us define marketing analytics and that are decisive in the definition of the categories used in the analysis of the deployed interviews. These are crucial notions to other study since the analysis of data will have a great importance for companies when defining their marketing strategies.

#### **2.1.2.1 Data Mining**

In order to make the transition from marketing to marketing analytics, it is first important to comprehend the concepts of data mining and analytics, crucial notions for the understanding of marketing analytics as a whole.

Starting on data mining, Phan and Vogel (2009) refer to it as the technology that enables the search through large amounts of data for meaningful patterns of consumer behaviour, a definition similar to the one offered by Bose (2008) that considers data mining as an emergent technology capable to find patterns, associations, changes, anomalies and significant structures from the available data. Both these definitions associate data mining more with technology than with a process. Concerning this matter, Shaw et al. (2001)

define data mining as the process of looking for data and analysing it seeking for inherent but helpful information. Furthermore, Gunnarsson et al. (2007) delineate data mining as a computer-assisted process of examining data from different views and concentrating it into concrete information, presenting us a definition where we can clearly perceive data mining as both a technology and as a process.

From all the above giving definitions there is one feature of data mining that it is crucial to point out. As both Baepler and Murdoch (2010) and Anderson et al. (2007) state, data mining is a statistical process that empowers researchers to work through enormous quantities of data looking for relationships and hidden patterns without a preconceived hypothesis, in order to support complex decisions. However, this capacity to empower people in the analysis of huge amounts of data reveals itself as a critical asset in today's accelerated market changes and explosions of data as identified by Al-Noukari and Al-Hussan (2008), aiding them to discover critical business information from the hidden data used as a support to business decisions.

Despite the fact that it is not based on a preconceived hypothesis, the contributes of data mining into turning huge amounts of data into concrete information leads marketers into adopting evermore data mining techniques in order to gain competitive advantage in their market (Breur, 2007; Chen et al., 2012).

#### **2.1.2.2 Analytics**

On the other hand, analytics is differentiated by Baepler and Murdoch (2010) from data mining by the fact that it is related with a more scientific, hypothesis-driven approach to data treatment and analysis. Nonetheless, both data mining and analytics as data treatment approaches can change the way corporations do business, while data-driven strategies become important points of competitive differentiation which is believe to result in incredible gains in terms of firm performance (Barton and Court, 2012).

Considering that the objective of the project is to find the impact that historical decisions concerning several catalogue construction marketing criteria had in Yves Rocher's sales it is critical to consider the descriptive analytics approach, which is defined by Acharya et al. (2013) as a description of a certain phenomenon through different ways that can



capture its relevant dimensions, with the objective of discovering what happened and what may happen. Hence, the objective of the analysis is to describe what happened in the past considering several criteria and by capturing important insights of what may happen in the future, provide key knowledge important to support the decision process.

### **2.1.3 Marketing Analytics – The Concept**

After going through the definitions of marketing, data mining and analytics, we can now easily understand the definition of marketing analytics. The concept of marketing analytics is vital since it is marketing analytics that within marketing creates the bond between the gathered data and the definition of the marketing strategy, influencing the decision making process and creating a competitive advantage for companies.

Marketing Analytics is a concept that normally is associated with technology and data analysis (Hauser, 2007). Lilien (2011) presents marketing analytics as an approach to put together customer and market data developing marketing decision making, permitted by technology and supported in models. Other authors present their own definition of marketing analytics that enable us to get a better insight on this marketing stream. Acharya et al. (2013) focus their study in analytics referring that their concept can be applied to several domains of the company including marketing. As a result, marketing analytics can also be defined as a fact-based deliberation which leads to insights and possible implications for planning future concerning marketing operations. Hauser (2007) presents a definition of marketing analytics according to Hitachi Consulting Group (2005) which states that marketing analytics is a “focus on coordinating every marketing touch point to maximize the customer experience as customers move from awareness, to interested, to qualified, to making the purchase”. Nonetheless, there is a common factor referred both in Acharya et al. (2013) and Hauser (2007) concerning the all-around application of marketing analytics. Both authors refer the importance of not only centre on the data collection and treatment, but also focus on the following step concerning the analysis, explanation and interpretation of that data. As Hauser (2007) states, data by itself represents separate pieces of information that only from the conjugation of technology use and marketing analyst’s interpretation capacities can be transformed into solid and usable information. The importance of this three-step process is also presented in

Marques et al. (2009) where the authors refer this process: data preparation (collection and treatment), data mining (interpretation) and deployment/evaluation; as a well-known and mostly used process recognised by the scientific community for database marketing which is strongly correlated to marketing analytics. For this reason, it is clear the importance of not only collecting and preparing the data, but also interpret/analyse it in order to provide support to the marketing decision process (Hauser, 2007).

Table 1 presents summarized definitions of the presented concepts in order to facilitate understanding. The concepts are presented with the same flow as the one used before so to facilitate the analysis of the relations within them:

**Table 1: Marketing Analytics Conceptual Table**

Concept	Main Idea
Marketing Information System	A complex system of people, machines and procedures with the objective of generating a stream of pertinent information that will support marketing decision making
Marketing	Marketing is about managing customer relationships, satisfying its needs and wants at a certain profit
Marketing Strategy	Marketing Strategy is the organization's stream of decisions concerning markets, products, marketing resources and activities to bring products of value to their customers
Marketing Mix	Marketing Mix is the set of tactical marketing tools (Price, Promotion, Product and Place), through which the company may influence the demand for its products
Data Mining	Data Mining is a technology-assisted process of looking for data and analysing it from different views seeking for inherent but helpful information
Analytics	Analytics is a hypothesis-driven approach for data treatment and analysis that in this case is done with the objective of discovering what happen and what may happen
Marketing Analytics	Marketing Analytics concerns not only the marketing data collection and treatment, but also the analysis and interpretation of that data in order to develop marketing decision making

Source: Own creation based on: Brien and Stanford, 1968; Barakat et al., 2016; Leonidou and Theodosiou, 2004; Ali and Rao, 2016; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; McNamara, 1972; McCarthy and Perreault, 1984; Kotler and Zaltman, 1971; Ambers and Roberts, 2008; Wymbs, 2011; Harrigan and Hulbert, 2011; Leeflang and Wittink, 2000; Varadarajan, 2010; Oxenfeldt, 1962; Shaw, 2012; Palmer, 2004; Phan and Vogel, 2009; Bose, 2008; Shaw et al., 2001; Gunnarsson et al., 2007; Baepler and Murdoch, 2010; Anderson et al., 2007; Al-Noukari and Al-Hussan, 2008; Breur, 2007; Chen et al., 2012; Barton and Court, 2012; Acharya et al., 2013; Hauser, 2007; Lilien, 2011; Acharya et al., 2013; Marques et al., 2009

## 2.2 Marketing Analytics in Companies

After going through the concept of marketing analytics, we now focus on presenting the effects that several authors have recognized from the application of marketing analytics within companies performance in order to have a first impression on the identified effects of marketing analytics. These effects have been studied and documented overtime (Germann et al. 2012). Germann et al. (2012) conducted an extensive study on the influence of deploying Marketing Analytics within firms, analysing its impact in companies from Fortune 1000, and they got to the conclusion that the deployment of Marketing Analytics can in most cases bring positive outcomes to firms and can also be

a source of competitive advantage. On a first stage, we will address the objective effects identified in the existing literature on the topic, moving on a second phase to the subjective effects where we can also identify the effects on the decision making process.

Hauser (2007, pp. 40) stated that Marketing Analytics, “if done thoroughly and properly, will increase profits by culling out the non-profitable customers and continuously delighting their favoured customers”, meaning that a correct application of Marketing Analytics will have a positive impact in firms’ profits. On another perspective presented by Leeflang and Wittink (2000) it is believed that an increase will occur on the modelling of casual effects on combined measures of demand since, according to the authors, managers will end-up recognising the benefits of studying the marginal effects of changes in the demand individual variables on the profits of their companies marketing investments.

There is an entire stream of marketing studies concerning the effects of marketing analytics in companies (Germann et al., 2012). In this section we will refer the ones that studied the objective effects of marketing analytics in companies. Archarya et al. (2014) studied the implementation of a large-scale marketing analytics framework that would help the gaming firm to improve its segmentation, targeting and optimization of the customer base, concluding on the richness of the company’s data in order to develop customer behaviour approaching models that would optimize its targeting. Sinha and Zoltners (2005) on the other hand, focussed their analysis describing 30 years of creating good sales territory alignments based on the process, model, wisdom development and system. Basing on a ten year period, the authors built a territory alignment that then implemented and tested for the following thirty years, being able to conclude on the increase of the average revenues resulting of such implementation and on the reduction of the salesperson travel-time within the first year of implementation, making here a touching point with the subjective effects of the marketing analytics deployment. Despite approaching through different perspectives and from different business areas the effects of deploying marketing analytics techniques in firms, both of the referred studies conclude on positive impacts resulting from the deployment of marketing analytics.

Boudreaud et al. (2007) focus its study on the implementation of analytics at HR departments and the impacts that such implementation will have in the growing of this

department's importance in companies as an ever more strategic partner. Despite not concerning marketing matters, it still centers on the application of an analytics framework at companies, a point that can be related to our study. They end-up concluding that even in an area as HR analytical skills and the deployment of such techniques, due to the positive outcomes verified in the organizational performance in the study, will become a crucial department competency.

In the table 2 we summarize the effects found on the deployment of marketing analytics within firms:

**Table 2: Marketing Analytics in Companies**

Marketing Analytics Application	Effects
In Companies	Profits increase; Sales increase and Time-Saving for salesperson

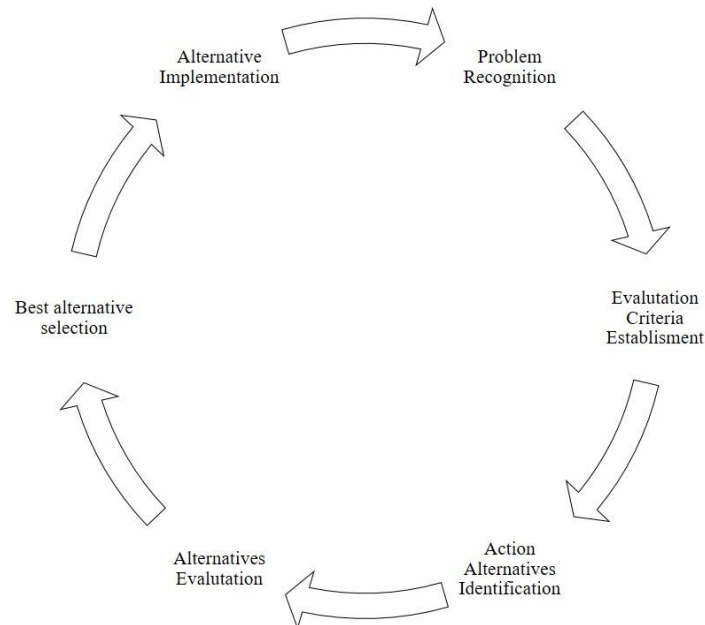
Source: Own creation based on: Germann et al., 2012; Hauser, 2007; Leeflang and Wittink, 2000; Archarya et al., 2014; Zoltners, 2005; Boudreaud et al., 2007

## 2.3 Decision Making Process

After understanding the definition of marketing analytics and its effects in companies, in accordance with the aim of this study - finding the effect that deploying marketing analytics has as a support to the top management decision making process - it is now imperative to define the concept of decision making process. Firstly, it is essential to refer the two phases that a decision making process goes through as presented by Elwyn and Miron-Shatz (2009). The first phase is the deliberation, a phase that starts at the information search task and ends at the preference construction task, comprising all the middle-tasks such as knowledge gaining and counterfactuals imagining, for example. As the main objective of this phase, we can consider it to be the deliberation on the problem on which to make a decision. The second stage is the determination, a phase that encompasses the integration of the deliberation inputs and the choice making before enacting the decision.

However, a complementary vision is necessary in order to comprehend the complex decision making process. Barlow (2005) considers that the decision making process is structured as presented.

**Figure 1: Barlow's Decision Making Process**



**Source: Barlow, 2005**

As a first step of the decision making process, Barlow (2005) refers the identification of the problem, a stage that is prior to the decision making but necessary to start the process. As middle-tasks we can identify the establishment of criteria that enable the evaluation of the information, the identification of several action alternatives and its evaluation and the final choice on the best of the alternative. The whole process is concluded with the implementation of the selected alternative.

In order to have a more complete view of the entire decision making process, it is necessary to accept the two perspectives since the combination of both helps us achieve a more complete overview of this process.

Another important concept related to the decision making process in study is the concept of data driven decision making, since the objective is to bring more data to that process, which relates to the habit of making decisions based on the gathered and analysed data rather than on the pure intuition of the decision makers (Fawcett and Provost, 2013). This concept is a growing concept in today's world, since the increasing prevalence of data mining and growing significance of data in many business sectors it is demanding a

stronger effort on analytical expertise improvement and the use of data in decision making (Leeftang et al., 2014), a view that is closely related with the one giving by Azvine et al. (2003) who stated that “data analysis is the heart of decision making in all business operations”, a situation that came for the development of intelligent software technology which enabled the creation of new methods that influence the human decision-making process.

When talking about the decision making applied to the project developed at Yves Rocher, it is also crucial to talk about strategic decision making which can be described as the allocation of several resources creating precedents for the lower decisions, a set of decisions that is of top management responsibility (Elbanna, 2006), since all the decisions that the analysis is set to influence, are of the responsibility of the local company’s top management.

## **2.4 Marketing Analytics and the Decision Making Process**

After defining decision making process we move on to the subjective effects found from the literature, effects that are related with the quality-improvement and time-saving in the decision making process made possible by the exploitation of marketing analytics, meaning that the main subjective effects found on the deployment of marketing analytics are correlated in the object of study – its support to the decision making process. Several authors have referred this effects, such as Hauser (2007) affirming that marketing analytics can continuously improve the decision-making quality; Acharya et al. (2013) which refer that the gaining ground of analytics derives from technology that can compile data in order to ease the decision making; Bekmamedov et al. (2011) that enhanced the usage by decision makers of comprehensive reporting and other analytics techniques in order to develop their decision-making capabilities; and Villars et al. (2011) that describe the data analysis users as more efficient and faster decision-makers than opponents in their industries. The importance of applying analytical techniques is also defended by Wierenga (2011) since, as the author presents, the fact that decision making is done by human, means that there is a possibility of errors biases that can poorly influence a firms’ performance. Therefore, applying analytical techniques can help reduce this possibility enabling better-informed and more rational decisions. There a lot more authors

considering data analytics as a support to the decision making process, authors that mainly conclude on the general improvement of the decision making process through the deployment of marketing analytics and usage of its findings. Shanks and Sharma (2011) mention the relevance that business analytics systems have as a support to managers and decision-makers enabling them to better interpret organisational data which leads to improvements in their decision making process, making the out coming decisions more consistent and evidence-based. Hair JR (2007) points that the reason for the improvements observed in the decision making do to analytics deployment derived from the better, more complete understanding of the available data which increases the consistency and accuracy of the made decisions. Hartnett (2015) writes on the capability of analytics empowering the decision-makers ability to extract the necessary knowledge from the existing data therefore with the consequence of improving their decision-making process. A final perspective on the effects of analytics on the decision-making process is given by Fawcett and Provost (2013) which consider the main goal of data science, a proxy for data analytics, as the improvement of decision making.

Mild et al. (2008) conducted a study where they implemented and tested a new tool for segmentation, positioning and targeting tool in the mobile phone market. The purpose of the tool has to allow the simultaneous consultation of the important information, such as target markets or customer preferences, on a single map facilitating the decision making process, improving it to become more time-effective and accurate. The market managers where surprised not only with the capability of the tool to represent the market on a single map but also with its capacity to permit intuitive interpretation. The tool also improved the internal communication between users which boosted the implementation of the tool since it assisted management in decision making.

The concept of decision making process and the effects found on the application of marketing analytics as a support to the decision making process – which will serve as a support to our analysis - are summarize in table 3 to facilitate their analysis and understanding.

**Table 3: Marketing Analytics as support to the Decision Making Process**

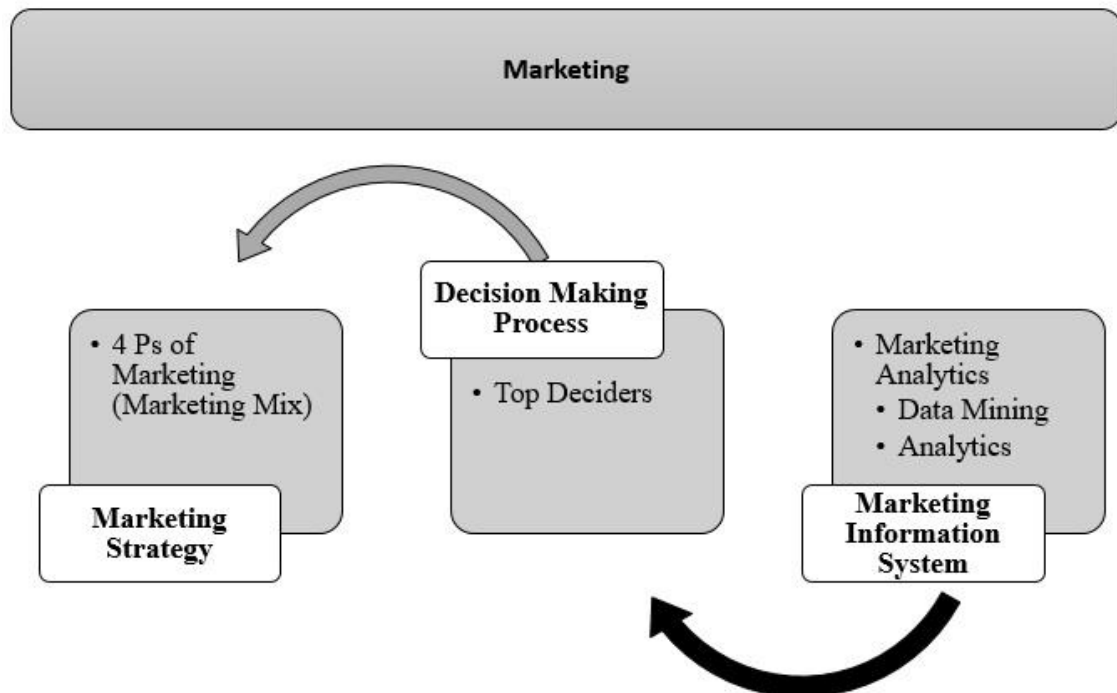
Concept / Marketing Analytics Application	Main Idea / Effects
Decision Making Process	The Decision Making Process includes both the problem identification, the deliberation phase, where a deliberation on the problem is done, and the determination phase, where the deliberation inputs are connected with the choice making which will then lead to a decision
As a support to the Decision Making Process	Decision quality improvement; Easier decisions; Development of decision making capabilities; Decisions are faster, more efficient, better informed and more rational

Source: Own creation based on: Elwyn and Miron-Shatz, 2009; Barlow, 2005; Fawcett and Provost, 2013; Leeflang et al., 2014; Azvine et al., 2003; Elbanna, 2006; Hauser, 2007; Acharya et al., 2013; Bekmamedov et al., 2011; Villars et al., 2011; Wierenga, 2011; Shanks and Sharma, 2011; Hair JR, 2007; Hartnett, 2015; Fawcett and Provost, 2013; Mild et al., 2008

Despite the positive effects presented by several authors on the application of marketing analytics as a support to the decision making process, Leeflang et al. (2014) mentions that managers are still apprehensive about fact-based decisions since they consider that it might reduce the creative thinking, a characteristic that they see as essential for the development of new initiatives and innovations within their companies.

We will next present in Figure 2 the conceptual framework of this study to provide a better understanding of what the purpose of the study is.

**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**



Source: Own creation

Through this conceptual framework we can understand that in the area of marketing companies need to define a marketing strategy, adapting for example their marketing mix strategy, which will help them achieve their goals. This marketing strategy has to pass through the decision making process of the company's marketing top deciders which can



be impacted by the marketing information system, concretely the marketing analytics technique.

For that reason, and having in mind all the presented effects on the deployment of marketing analytics as a support to the decision making process, we aim with this study to verify the existence of such effects (improvement of decision quality, decision making time-saving), to analyse if the increase on understanding of data will reduce the out-of-box thinking and to search for any possible new effects not referred before, based on the outputs of the project develop at Yves Rocher.

### **3. Methodology**

Once finished the literature review on the topic in study, we move into the definition of the methodological process that will be used in order to study the defined research question.

Considering the key research question of this project - What are the effects of applying Marketing Analytics practices as a support for the Top Management decision process? – a question very related with the explanation over a concrete application of marketing analytics techniques, the most suitable method found for the study of such theme was the case study method (Yin, 2009). Beside the research question type that we aim to answer, the real side of the phenomenon under investigation as well as the zero impact of the investigator under the events that influence the answer are clear factors that indicate this as a proper scenario for the application of the case study methodology (Yin, 2009).

As a result, this section of the study is divided in three crucial points. The first point will focus on the description of the case study, going from the company presentation, passing through the project explanation and ending on the case study organization. The second point will present the data collection process going through all the data collection processes used in the order which they were deployed. In the third section we will describe the data found and present the analysis process conducted on that data. Finally we will present a closing overview of the steps followed in this study, presenting a clear view of the phases that the study had to pass through in order to achieve its final conclusions.

### **3.1 The Case Study**

The case study is a research approach that eases the phenomenon investigation in its context while using a wide variety of data sources (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Graham (2000) also refers to case study in the same way, writing about it as a study which explores a case (an unit of human activity that can only be studied in the context and which exist only in the here and now) to answer specific research questions seeking through the process for diverse types of evidence. Stake (1995) points that a “case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances”. Yin (2009) considers the case study methodology as a very useful one when searching for new concepts as well as studying the concrete use of the theoretical elements. Yin (2003) also points out that the case study must be the method of choice when the phenomenon being analyzed, that may be a project or program in an evaluation study, can be differentiated from the context where it is inserted.

Having in mind the phenomenon under study – the effects of marketing analytics as a support to the decision making process – and concerning the several definitions and peculiarities presented by the several authors, the choice of this method to investigate the research study became stronger since this is indeed a concrete phenomenon, being the focus to investigate how this is expressed in the real situation based on a theoretical support.

A good example of a case to use when using the case study method, needs to present a clear insight on the phenomenon at study. As so, we consider Yves Rocher Portugal as a good example where to study the phenomenon since marketing analytics has a crucial importance within the day-to-day activity of the company, as we found within the interviews were the interviewees revealed the importance of marketing analytics on the operations of the company's daily life.

On the following chapter we will start by make a presentation of the company Yves Rocher, followed by a description of the project developed there. Afterwards, we will make an exhibition of all the stages necessary to follow when applying the case study methodology. As stated by Yin (2009), this most include the following steps: case study design, data collection preparation, data collection and data analysis and analysis report.

### **3.1.1 Yves Rocher – The Company**

Yves Rocher is a French cosmetics company started in the attic of Yves Rocher's family home, at La Gacilly, Brittany, France, in 1959 when he started applying his passion for the plant world into the creation of plant-based beauty products. A passion that has also influenced the company's growth since its creation by the maintenance all around the business model of a compromise of protecting the world's biodiversity, a compromise that is recognizable through the several initiatives that the company holds worldwide environmentally related.

As a way of remaining loyal to his home village, La Gacilly, Mr. Rocher decided from the very beginning to promote the sale of its products through catalogue and correspondence, an innovative sale technique in the cosmetics sector at the time. By embarrassing this long-distance sale technique, Mr. Rocher has able to share the success of his company with his village aiding it to develop with the expansion of his company. This idea has been kept through the years even after Mr. Rocher's death in 2009 since most of the company's products are produced in Brittany which contributes directly and indirectly to the creation of 10000 jobs being responsible for Mr. Rocher's original aspiration of saving his village. Only teen years after, in 1969, in Paris, we have the inauguration of Yves Rocher's first store. Today, more than 50 years after, the brand is present all over the world counting with over 30 million customers worldwide distributed through 88 countries.

Despite the enormous growth that the company has being having through the years, its objective has been kept since the start. Their objective of providing to women globally price accessible and quality plant-based products while acting in harmony with the environment as every plant and tree do in nature, is a vision that passed from its founder being the base and a daily guide for the company throughout the world.

One of the company's reasons for success is the unique business model in the beauty products world, since the company presents itself as the full responsible for the whole life-cycle of its products, controlling every single step from the growing and harvesting of the used plants to the manufacturing and distribution of its beauty products. This business model is consistent with the company's vision since it allows them to reduce

their environmental impact while being able to deliver quality beauty products at the best prices to their customers.

At Yves Rocher Portugal, marketing analytics presents as a crucial part within the company activity since their sales technique is the catalogue sale. Being that so the construction of their sales tool, the catalogue, and the decisions inherent to that construction are based on the analysis of the historical data since that is one of the most reliable indicator when thinking about the sales strategy, or in this case, since it is related with its product promotion, the marketing strategy.

### **3.1.2 Yves Rocher – The Project**

Based on a perspective of continuous development and in a clear effort to better understand their customers' buying patterns, Yves Rocher Portugal decided, through the analysis of their historical catalogue sales, to study the factor that highly appear to have influenced their customers in the previous years with the objective of adapting their selling strategies within the catalogues in order to obtain better results in the future. The company also looked upon this project as a way of creating a competitive advantage in the fierce Portuguese cosmetics market, especially on the companies that such as Yves Rocher Portugal adopt a selling technique based in single distributed sellers around Portugal that are able to sell their products and present them to the possible clients by the use of a catalogue created by the company. As examples of Yves Rocher Portugal competitors in this market we have Avon and Oriflame.

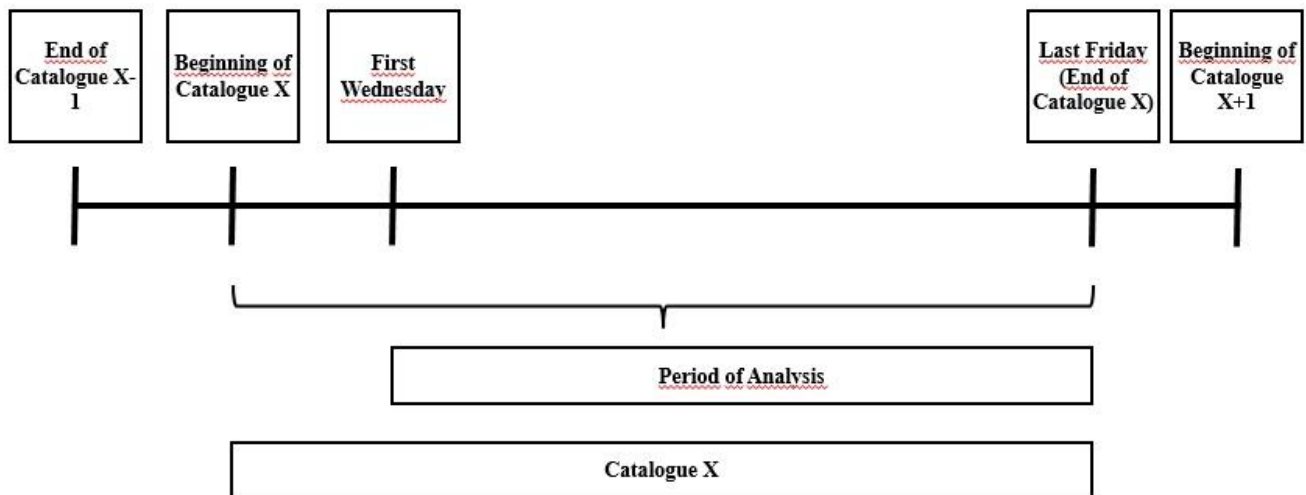
The project consisted in the creation and analysis of the relations that several catalogue marketing criteria have in the total sales on the company's products, an analysis that was done based on the company's historical data. The marketing criteria selected to analyze through the project represent the marketing mix of the company, the strategic components of the company's catalogue construction, meaning that they refer to the 4 Ps of marketing that the company can influence in order to change their customers' perspectives about their products. The most important marketing criteria, the ones that lead to concrete discoveries that can be used by the company, were the following:

- Catalogue Positioning (Place)

- Discount Rate (Price)
- Page Company (Promotion)
- Price Variation (Price)
- Discount Rate Presence (Promotion)
- Family Type (Product)

The task done had to do with the problem of catalogues overlapping of offers in the period when one ends and the next one begins and the possibility for customers in getting the best possible offer in that period of time. Since this problem would have a huge impact in the results obtain in the products sales, an update was done in the period of analysis for each individual catalogue with the consideration of the beginning of each catalogue in the first Wednesday of its period and the ending in the last Friday of that catalogue period. As for the period duration, it is important to refer that the normal duration of a catalogue time span is 3 weeks with the exception of the last catalogue of the year that lasts 4 weeks. For a better understanding of this adjustment, we present in Figure 3 a scheme about the catalogue period:

Figure 3: Catalogue Period



Source: Own creation

As for the products sets created for the project, those depended on the type of relation that it was been studied. Totally, it was created 5 sets of products, each of them used in the exploration and in the posterior finding of certain effects of the marketing criteria studied in the project. Two of the product sets were general ones, one considering the top 50 most selling products in quantity and the top 50 most selling products in price and the other one which included a total of about 30 products that represented all the product families

sold by the company and that included both top selling products and less sold products. As for the remaining 3 products sets, one considered products target of the company's price promotions and the other two involved products target of the company's branding strategies in catalogues. As for the period of analysis used in the product sets, the data included values from the first catalogue of the year 2013 until the maximum of the fourteenth catalogue of the year 2015.

In terms of methodology used, it was based in the determination of the average individual presence rate, which represent the average amount of times that a certain product is ordered in 100 total orders, for each marketing criteria and the creation of double entry tables that would enable the analysis of the numbers in the search for the existing relations between them.

The project had the duration of 6 months through each the methodology was applied and adapted if necessary. It was found a total of 10 important relations that will support the company in the creation of the Golden Rules for the construction of catalogues in the future.

### **3.1.3 Case Study Stages**

In the case study design stage we defined the research questions, the propositions of the study in case those exist and unit of analysis. Besides this three points, it is still crucial to define the logical link between the gathered data and the defined propositions and the criteria that it will be used to interpret the findings of the study (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, the research design must cover up four criteria that judge its quality: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2009). The identification of the research question, already done before, was the first step into the design of the case study, a step that with the continuous focus of the research question on a certain topic - the effects of deploying marketing analytics techniques as a support to the top management decision process – enabled us to identify the unit of analysis: Yves Rocher Portugal Top Management decision making process. Afterwards, it was done a literature review concerning the topic in study, which will enables us to make certain propositions that lead us throughout the study, especially in the data collection stage, a process that occurred

simultaneously with the definition of the study purpose – exploring unknown effects in the decision making process. Based on such literature review the following propositions regarding the study were made: the deployment of marketing analytics support the decision making process by improving its quality through making the decisions easier based on a process that is more efficient, more informed and faster. Concerning this propositions, the relations between this propositions and the data collected is to confirm that this are real effects resulting in the decision making process from the deployment of marketing analytics techniques. Besides the analysis of this relations, a data exploration will be developed in order to find other possible effects that were not found in the literature review and therefore were not considered as propositions of the case study. The created relations combined with the use of multiple sources of evidence and the triangulation of the data obtained in all the sources assures the construct validity. The reliability is guaranteed by the creation and use of a study case protocol and the development of a case study database. As for the criteria that it will be used to interpret the study discoveries an explanation building which will assure the internal validity. As for the external validity since we were dealing with a simple study case, the test is not applicable.

The next stage was the data collection preparation that is associated with the creation of a planning including the definition of a case study protocol, the choice of the data sources and the previous search of generic information regarding the case study. This data collection must follow three principles as stated by Yin (2009): resort to multiple data sources, creation of a case database and maintenance of a chain of evidence. The first step in this stage was the pursuit of general information regarding the case study. As such, information concerning Yves Rocher was collected as well as information on the decision making process concerning the catalogue construction. Having done this, it was possible to define a case study protocol for data collection. The protocol was created based on the usage of multiple evidence sources: participant-observation, direct observation and interviews, sources that were related by a logic chain and that will be developed later on. The protocol also includes the type of evidence aimed to find in every source as well as the guidance lines for the research conduction through each one of them. In table 4 a synthesis of the protocol is made.



**Table 4: Case Study Protocol**

Type of Source	Source/Place	Objective/Evidence
Participant-Observation	Yves Rocher Portugal	Participation in creating the study and in the first analysis
Direct Observation	Yves Rocher Portugal	Effects of the study conclusions application
Interviews	Yves Rocher Portugal General Manager	Effects in their decision making process produced by the study
	Yves Rocher Portugal Marketing Manager	

Source: Own creation based on: Yin, 2009

The third stage is the data collection stage which is based as said before in the documental analysis, the participant-observation, the direct observation and interviews. The usage of multiple evidence sources guarantees the first of the three collection principles stated by Yin (2009). The other two are assured by the creation of a case database and the establishment of a logic chain between the evidences gathered through the data collection stage. Being validated the verification of the three data collection principles, we can now present the steps took in this stage. Firstly, considering the physical participation in the realization of the marketing analytic project proposed by the company, a participant-observation is done through the analysis of the first effects created by the conclusions in the decision making process. Secondly, following the defined process and after the end of the internship developed at Yves Rocher Portugal, a direct observation is done possible with the visit to the company sometime after the presentation of the conclusions which enabled the observation of the new effects created by the study in the decision making process and in the company's catalogue construction. Finally, two interviews were performed to the two main deciders of Yves Rocher Portugal when it comes to catalogue construction: the general manager and the marketing manager. The interviews were performed with the objective of finding the effects that the study conclusion have had

until them on their decision making process and future impacts that they considered derived for the study. Every collected evidence was inserted in the case database, following the logic connection between them, so that it was possible through the project and in future project to access to the information.

The final stage is the evidence analysis and report which is possible due to the storage of all the collected evidence in the case database. Therefore, a triangulation of the evidences is possible in order to produce reports, as well as developing the explanation building. Concerning that in this stage is possible to present the effects that marketing analytics had in the company's top deciders' decision making process, a process that is based in the analysis of mainly qualitative data, a single report is enough to present both the case study in its real application and the final conclusions originated from the real application of the case study.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

In this section we will develop on the data collection phase of the study.

As said in the last section, the data collection of the study will follow a case study protocol consisting of: participant-observation, direct observation and interviews.

The participant-observation phase, that included both the development of the project proposed by the company and the initial analysis within meetings of the effects produced by the study, allowed the verification of the first effect produced by the project on the decision making process.

The direct observation phase which was developed on the posterior phase to the development of the project facilitated the finding of concrete effects derived from the application of the project conclusions.

The interview phase, the main data collection source of the case study, was executed on the two top deciders of Yves Rocher Portugal with the objective of finding the effects that the developed project has in their decision making process. The objective of the interview was to obtain mainly qualitative data on those effects which led to the development of an open-ended interview. Nevertheless, a quantitative question was made based on the NPS

(Net Promoter Score) perspective in order to understand their objective evaluation of the project developed in their decision making process. Being the main data collection mean, the interviews will be developed in the following sections starting by an analysis of the methodological aspects of the analyzed similar studies which will be conjugated with theoretical support to justify the choice of interviews as the main data collection source and will finalize with the presentation of the interview process of creation.

### **3.2.1 The Interview**

After analyzing some similar studies: Acharya et al. (2014), Sinha and Zoltners (2005), Mild et al. (2008) and Boudreaud et al. (2007); it was clear to us that there are numerous data collection processes that we could use in our study. However, concerning the objective of the study and its focus on the effects produced at Yves Rocher Portugal leading us to the necessity of thoroughly analyzing the changes in the decision making process of the top manager deciders at Yves Rocher Portugal, the data collection process found that best suited our objective has the interview.

Qualitative data, a source of data usually in the form of words instead of numbers (Miles and Huberman, 1994), it is a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and enlightenments of processes in detectable local contexts. While using qualitative data a researcher can observe exactly which events led to which consequences and the inherent explanations. Also, the fact that normally words tend, when correctly organized, to have a more concrete and meaningful impact in convincing the readers than enormous quantities of pages of numbers (Miles and Huberman, 1994), gives qualitative studies a quality of “undeniability”. Miles and Huberman (1994) also point out the main strengths of qualitative data which make it a strong type of data to use in research studies. As for the main strengths pointed by the authors we focus: the fact that qualitative data focus on ordinary events in natural settings; its richness and holism which gives it a strong potential in revealing complexity and the fact that it emphasizes on people’s “lived experience” which enables researchers to find the meanings that people give to certain events of the social world in their lives.

Based on the understanding on qualitative data and the notion giving by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) of interview, where they define it as “a conversation that produces situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes”, this data collection technique was selected has the main one to develop in the collection of the qualitative data necessary to the searching of the study conclusions. The fact that the two main uses of case study are to find the descriptions and interpretations of others about certain events and that the interview can be seen as the main road to multiple realities concerning the studied events (Stake, 1995), gives us a clear understanding on the importance of adopting this method when collecting the necessary data for the study.

Gillham (2000) defined five factors that make it viable to use interview techniques in a qualitative research:

- Involvement of small number of people (the general manager and the marketing manager of Yves Rocher Portugal);
- Accessibility (knowledge of the study since it derives from the project developed at the company);
- “Key” people that cannot be lose (the company’s top deciders that see their decision making process influenced by the project)
- Questions are mainly open-ended (it will be presented in the next section)
- The material is sensitive in character (search for effects in their personal decision making process)

The verification of this five factors attributes to the interview an overpowering strength due to the “wealth” of the communication that is possible to obtain with the deployment of interviews.

### **3.2.2 The Interview’s Process of Creation**

After deciding on the utilization of the interview as the method of data collection for the study, it was important to create the script of the interview. The process of creation of the interview guide was made on the basis of the considerations giving by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Gillham (2000) and Jacob and Furgerson (2012).

The first two authors enable the first definition on the type of interview to be taken. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) presents the concept of unstructured interview as a type of interview that due to its qualitative nature produces a greater amount of raw data than other. As a first consideration, this was the type of interview selected to be deployed, a decision that was changed when looking at the definition giving by Gillham (2000) of semi-structured interview, that the author considers as “the most important form of interviewing in case study research”. The fact that this type of interview incorporates both open and closed questions makes it the best type of interview to use in the study, where we considered the qualitative questions as open-ended questions and the quantitative questions as closed questions.

After the selection of the type of interview to be deployed, it was necessary to create the interview guide. This process was developed following the steps that Jacob and Furgerson (2012) presented as the steps necessary to write successful interview protocols:

- Pick an interesting topic – done at the definition of the research question;
- Guide questions on the research made – literature review done on the topic served as a support in the creation of the questions to be made;
- Use a script for the beginning and the end of the interview – it will be possible to see in the interview guide that the interview was structured in a way to follow this step;
- Make open-ended questions – most of the questions made were open-ended with the objective of collecting the concrete thought of the interviewees on the theme;
- Start with the basics – it will be possible to see in the interview guide;
- Start with easier questions and move on to the most difficult and controversial – the interview starts with questions regarding general ideas on some study concepts moving to the more specific questions regarding the research questions;
- Write big, expansive questions – several questions were made with the objective of getting unexpected data;

- Be willing to make revisions of the interview during its deployment – there is a room in the interview guide for questions depending on the flow of the interview;
- Don't make the interview too long – the interview were though to last less than an hour with few questions divided in three grand ideas: general thoughts/ideas on the concepts, general questions about the project done at the company and specific questions about the project done at the company (effects in the decision making process).

The steps presented were the most important for our design of the interview protocol. Nevertheless, there are other steps identified by Jacob and Furgerson (2012) that were not important for the creation of our interview protocol. In Annex 1, it is possible to see the interview guide created for the study data collection.

### **3.3 Data Treatment**

In the following section we will describe the process of data analysis used in the study that allowed us to get to the conclusions of the study. During this section we will be also presenting the treated data collected which will then be used when presenting the results of the study.

As such, this section will be divided through the four data collection processes used along the study: participative observation, direct observation and interviews. Once more, being the interviews the main data collection process used in the study, we will focus our attention on this topic.

#### **3.3.1 Participant-Observation**

The data collection phase of the participant-observation was developed during the deployment of the internship realized in the company analysed – Yves Rocher Portugal.

Concerning that the findings obtained in the project weren't all got in the end, there were some conclusions presented to the top management of Yves Rocher Portugal that revealed as important to their decision making process. Nevertheless, and having in

mind that the conclusions of the project still need to be analysed and understood in order to produce effects on the top management decision making process, the detection obtained in this data collection process were reduced.

Having that said, through what was possible to verify within meetings with the top deciders of the company there was a crucial change that derived from the project conclusions which concerned the flow of thinking used to make the decisions on where to put the products within the catalogues. With the help of some project conclusions the top deciders of the company were able to better define their flow of thinking about the placement of the products, making their decision making process about this topic more structured leading to more informed and higher quality decisions.

### **3.3.2 Direct Observation**

The second stage of the data collection process was deployed with the visit to the company after the end of the project and the presentation of its conclusions.

The visit was done some time after the end of the project so to give time to the top deciders of the company to analyse the conclusions and adapt their decision making process. The process was conducted by obtaining feedback from the top deciders on the already made changes while observing the new catalogues while meeting with them. Despite the fact that the conclusions of the project weren't still fully applied, a crucial change was already able to verify.

The change concerned the creation of a new marketing tool to use within the catalogue in order to increase the high visibility parts of the catalogue.

Although the verified change was already being applied at the end of the project, the results of the project revealed important to confirm the pertinence of the new tool and the possible impact that it may have on the sales of the company. Consequently the conclusions of the analysis helped the top deciders understand the possible benefits that the created tool could bring to their sales results, making their decisions easier when thinking about the possible application of the tool.

The conclusions of the study also helped to better define the possible use of the new tool and how to be better used. For that reason it helped the top deciders on their creative thinking about this marketing strategy.

### **3.3.3 Interview**

The final and most important data collection stage was the interview phase.

The two interviews were conducted in the company following the already presented interview guide (Annex 1). Although the guide was used in the interviews, the flow of each interview led to some changes of questions that weren't made and the addition of others that weren't planned previously. In the Annexes presenting the translation of both interviews we highlighted the questions made and it is possible to see the planned questions that were made and the alternative questions that arose during the interviews.

The two interviewees were selected based on their key importance within the company when deciding about the criteria analysed throughout the project.

The first interviewee (Annex 2) is the company's customer marketing responsible managing the product in catalogue and the results obtained. Has been only working in the company for three years, revealing in the interview that there is still some lack of experience when dealing with the subject in study. The second interviewee (Annex 3) is the company's country manager, being responsible for the company's representation in Portugal. Has global responsibilities within the company where has worked for several years enabling the development of some instinct regarding the matter in study.

Having in mind the fact that both interviewees are the top deciders at Yves Rocher Portugal on the catalogue construction criteria, we found no need to interview more people about the topic in study. As said before, the objective of the interviews was to discover the usage that the company's top deciders gave to the information produced within the project deployed at the company and to infer from there the effects that the information created ended-up having in their decision making process.



The interviews were deployed in Portuguese and translated to English afterwards, meaning that there is a possible limitation to the study conclusions within the interviews since some of the expressions or ideas may be distorted due to the translation.

The interviews were analysed using an analysis grid divided through four main categories: type of analysis to deploy; importance of marketing analytics; decision making process; and effects of marketing analytics as a support to the decision making process. The three first categories are divided in two possibilities of answer, being the last category, the one that concerns the objective of the study divided in five possibilities of answer representing four effects that were mainly referred in the literature and a fifth were we accounted some different effects found that weren't mentioned within the existing literature. Next we present table 5 where is possible to analyse the four different categories and where we present an explanation for each one of the possibilities of answer.

**Table 5 : Analysis grid – Categories explanation**

Category	Possibilities of Answer	Explaining	Authors
Type of analysis to deploy	Data Mining	Analysis is more focussed in analysing data without setting hypothesis on what to look for	Phan and Vogel (2009); Bose (2008); Shaw et al. (2001); Gunnarsson et al. (2007); Baepler and Murdoch (2010); Anderson et al. (2007); Al-Noukari and Al-Hussan (2008); Breur (2007); ; Chen et al. (2012)
	Analytics	Analysis is hypothesis-driven being done with the objective of discovering what happen and what may happen	Baepler and Murdoch (2010) ; Barton and Court (2012); Acharya et al. (2013)
Importance of Marketing Analytics	Day-a-day activity	Marketing analytics is a day-a-day activity for the company	Own
	Punctual activity	Marketing analytics represent a punctual activity for the company	Own
Decision Making Process	Based on data	Decision making process is based on data obtained from studies	Elwyn and Miron-Shatz (2009); Barlow (2005); Fawcett and Provost (2013); Leeftang et al. (2014); Azvine et al. (2003); Elbanna (2006)
	Concerning a subjective component	Decision making process is stated in a personal evaluation of the situation	Elwyn and Miron-Shatz (2009); Barlow (2005); Elbanna (2006)
	Decision Quality improvement	Marketing analytics improves the decision's quality	Hauser (2007); Bekmamedov et al. (2011); Shanks and Sharma (2011); Hair JR (2007); Hartnett (2015); Fawcett and Provost (2013)
Effects of Marketing Analytics as support to the decision making process	Easier Decisions	Marketing analytics makes decision making easier	Acharya et al. (2013)
	Quicker Decisions	Marketing analytics makes decision making quicker	Villars et al. (2011); Mild et al. (2008)
	Better informed decisions	Marketing analytics enhances the information degree in decision making	Wierenga (2011)
	Others	Other possible effects that weren't mentioned	Own

Source: Own creation based on: Phan and Vogel, 2009; Bose, 2008; Shaw et al., 2001; Gunnarsson et al., 2007; Baepler and Murdoch, 2010; Anderson et al., 2007; Al-Noukari and Al-Hussan, 2008; Breur, 2007; Chen et al., 2012; Barton and Court, 2012; Acharya et al., 2013; Elwyn and Miron-Shatz, 2009; Barlow, 2005; Fawcett and Provost, 2013; Leeftang et al., 2014; Azvine et al., 2003; Elbanna, 2006; Hauser, 2007; Bekmamedov et al., 2011; Shanks and Sharma, 2011; Hair JR, 2007; Hartnett, 2015; Villars et al., 2011; Mild et al., 2008; Wierenga, 2011

The first category: type of analysis to deploy; is divided in two possibilities of answer: data mining and analytics. The difference between the possibilities of answer is in the setting of hypothesis before the start of the study. The objective was to find from which

method the interviewees looked on to marketing analytics: a non-hypothesis driven approach as data mining or a hypothesis approach as analytics.

The second category: importance of marketing analytics; is also divided in two possibilities of answer: day-a-day activity or punctual activity. The goal was to understand how the interviewees assumed marketing analytics within the company: as a daily activity of the company or as a punctual activity deployed with a certain purpose.

The third category: decision making process; is once again divided in two possibilities of answer: based on data or concerning a subjective component. Having in mind the aim of the study at hand, this category helped us understand if the interviewees based their decisions either on analysis studies and the inherent analysed data or on their personal evaluation of the situation, their experience on the matters to be decided.

The fourth and final category: effects of marketing analytics as a support to the decision making process; is divided into five possibilities of answer: decision quality improvement, easier decisions, quicker decisions, better informed decisions and other; and it is the category mostly correlated with the question of study and the category that greatly helped us get to the results that answered to that question. The four initial possibilities of answer represent the effects found in the literature recognised as effects that marketing analytics as in the decision making process of marketing deciders: the quality of the made decisions improves with marketing analytics, decisions are easier to make when marketing analytics is deployed and presents us with treated data, decisions are made at a quicker pace, and decisions are made on a higher degree of information concerning the matters. The last possibility of answer concerns other effects found throughout the interviews that weren't identified within the existing literature and consist of the knowledge improvement provided by the study.

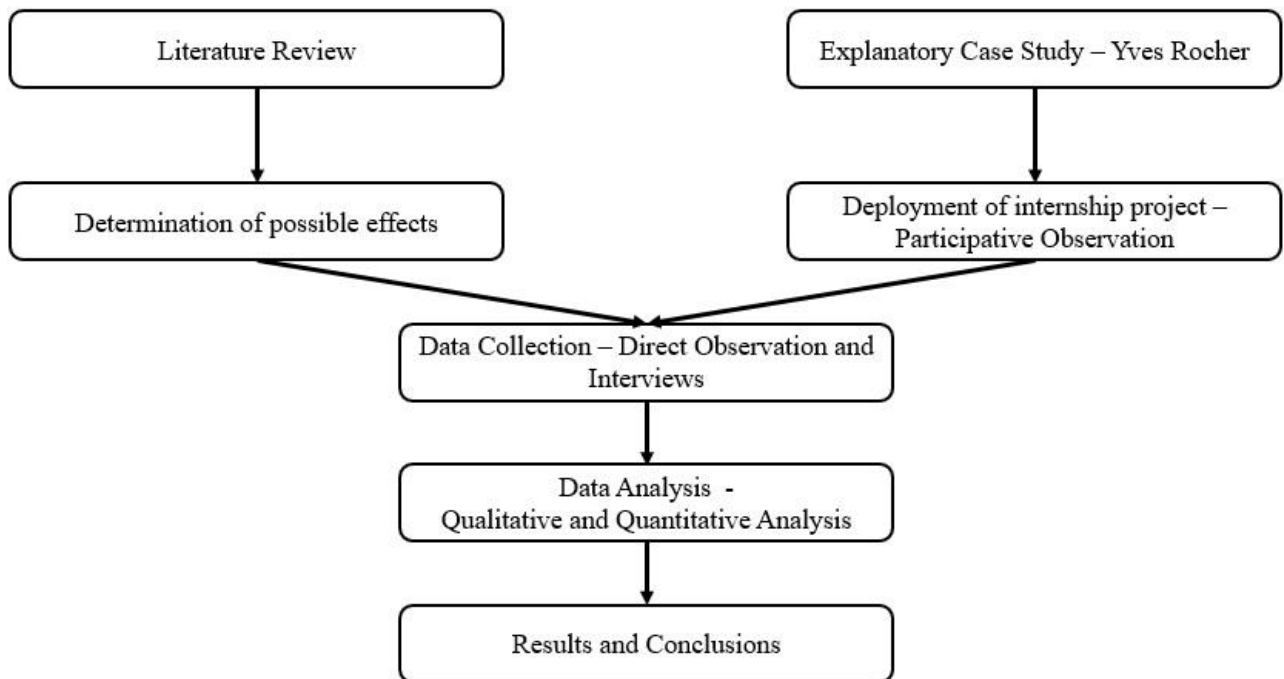
With the data collected in through all the data collection processes we were able to get to the study results that are present in section four.

### 3.4 Steps of Study

This topic of the study is done as a way of simplifying the reader understanding of the process used to study the selected theme and it can serve as a review of the entire methodological process used in the study.

So, as a conclusion to the methodological section, a scheme considering the main phases of this study is presented in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Steps of Study



Source: Own creation

The goal of the study is to describe the effects that the deployment of marketing analytics as a support to the top management decision making process. Being the result of a project, the proposed study started with the development of the proposed project at Yves Rocher Portugal. As a consequence, the first stage of the study was to explain the case study developed at Yves Rocher Portugal concerning of an analysis of the impact that historical decisions concerning several catalogue construction marketing criteria had in Yves Rocher Portugal's sales. Since the objective of the study is to explain the effects obtained with the implementation, the selected case study can be well described as an explanatory case study (Baxter and Jack, 2008). During the realization of the internship we were able to deploy one of the data collection processes defined: the participative observation.

Simultaneously, a literature review concerning the theme was developed in order to determine possible effects that can be present in the existing studies and articles. This step of the study in conjunction with the development of the internship, unveiled the necessary means to develop the main phase of the study concerning data collection – the interviews.

The main mean used to obtain data was through the deployment of interviews done to the company's top deciders asking for feedback regarding the project's conclusion and its effects on their decision making process. Due to the low amount of people involved in the process of data collection, their accessibility, their importance to the study that was developed since they were considered as the best possible subject able to provide answers to the research question in hand and the inevitable open-ended questions that were part of the interviews, the interview method for data collection was considered as the most appropriated for this study (Graham, 2000). At the same time, we also deployed the remaining data collection process – the direct observation – when visiting the company and getting some insights on the existing changes.

The next phase of the study concerned the analysis of data. Having in mind the gathering of mainly qualitative data, a recursive abstraction, through the use of an analysis grid, was deployed in order to summarize all the feedback obtained and decode it. As for the quantitative data gathered, it has based on an interview question where it has asked to the interviewee to generally quantify the general effects of the study held at Yves Rocher Portugal. For this data, a Net Promoter Score (NPS) perspective of analysis will be deployed in order to examine the satisfaction on the study held and its possible effects.

The final step of the study concerned the congregation of the analysis done in the form of study results and the determination of the conclusions resulting for the study, step that is presented in this next section.

## 4. Results

The results got from the collected data are presented in the following section.

The analysis of the interviews concerned a counting on the total number of statements found in each interview related with the possibilities of answer. Table 6 presents the totals. While analysing this table, we will present some of the most relevant statements found.

**Table 6: Analysis grid – Answers' counting**

Category	Possibilities of Answer	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Counting
Type of analysis to deploy	Data Mining	1	0	1
	Analytics	1	6	7
Importance of Marketing Analytics	Day-a-day activity	2	3	5
	Punctual activity	0	0	0
Decision Making Process	Based on data	4	2	6
	Concerning a subjective component	0	1	1
	Decision Quality improvement	2	2	4
Effects of Marketing Analytics as support to the decision making process	Easier Decisions	2	0	2
	Quicker Decisions	4	0	4
	Better informed decisions	7	2	9
	Others	3	1	4

**Source: Own creation**

Looking to the table above where we present the total counting of answers found throughout the interviews regarding each of the possibilities of answer we can get some important conclusions that will help us come to the study results.

On the first category, there is a clear tendency to refer to marketing analytics in an analytics approach rather than a data mining approach. This is clearly noticeable in statements such as: "It think that the most important of all this are the information construction assumptions" and "all the data mining processes and trying to find the assumptions to our questions must come from the assumption: I know what I want, I know what questions I have, I know the way how I'm going to make them, but the answer is what I don't know. Now, if we enter in this thinking: let's work the information and something will appear without us knowing really well what we are

looking for, I personally consider that to be very wrong"; mainly stated by interviewee 2 more experienced in the company and with a better understanding on what to look for. However, both interviewees stated the importance of knowing our questions and what we want to study so to define a clear and stable methodology to test our hypothesis.

On the second category it was only possible to find statements regarding the first possibility of answer: day-a-day activity. Both interviewees consider marketing analytics and the analysis of marketing information a daily activity. This importance of deploying marketing analytics techniques and analysing the daily produced marketing information is possible to get from statements such as: "For me it's a daily task" or "I can't be disconnected from that part for long"; said by interviewee 1 which is responsible for the company's customer marketing. Moreover with interviewee's 2 following statements: "reality is be proximity mutable" or "what today is true, tomorrow is no more"; we see that the company is alerted to the need of constantly analysing market data since this a continuously mutable world where "what today is true, tomorrow is no more".

As for the third category we find a clear tendency to base decision making in data. However, we can conclude on a need of conjugating both data and personal feeling since both interviewees referred that importance. Interviewee 1 mainly stated decision making as a process based on data: "I need to know where we are, I always need to have my objective in mind" and "I always need to have in mind the analysis that were made". However, having in mind interviewee 1's least experience within the company, it's normal to obtain this result. Like said by interviewee 2: "instinct and feeling are nothing more than experience. It's when we feel that, by virtue of learning that may be bigger or smaller, when we feel that in a way that we can't rationalize, explain with detail or prove, we think that certain thing is well-done or less well-done."; and despite the fact that "we all have experience", this experience takes some time to build and marketing analytics and its studies have an essential part in its construction: "Naturally the studies that are made, the questions had, the conclusions gotten, make the experience.". So, it is natural that the less experience of interviewee 1 means that the decision making process tends to be more based on data since the experience, hence the subjective component in decision making, it is still being built. As for interviewee 2, we get statements for both

possibilities of answer: "based on the information that he gets", "this type of data, this kind of information is crucial" and "with some instinct, some feeling". Having more experience in the company it is natural that interviewee 2 bases decisions not only in data but also in the accumulated yearly experience.

Finally on the fourth category, we found statements to confirm all the possibilities of answer, meaning that we confirm all the effects already presented for marketing analytics in the decision making process, but we also found some possible not identified effects. On the effects already found in the literature, we found that for easier decisions and quicker decisions, only interviewee 1 answered about them: "I end-up having less doubts and I have less doubts regarding where to put things" and "it helped me to make faster decisions". This fact can have to do with the already identified less experience felt by interviewee 1, meaning that the project helped interviewee 1 develop the decision making process. As for the other two possibilities of answer, both interviewees made references to them during their interviews: "it makes me never to forget what is really important", "I think is that the decision making process about location, price, discount, this is promotion, etc. are now more solid or less fragile", "confirmed that suspicion that we had", "it also helped me to understand what not to do", "there were certain premises that were confirmed" and "this has already given us some guidance". This means that the project helped increase the decisions quality since it enabled them to never forget the important matters and it turned the decision making process into a more solid one. Also, the made decisions can be considered as more informed decisions since some premises and suspicions were confirmed and most important it helped them understand what not to do. As for the last possibility of answer, we found statements that leads us to the fact that marketing analytics impacts the decision making process leading its deciders to the search of new alternatives to the problems at hand, in the case at study, it led them to on the decision about new promotion techniques: "trying to find, trying to put other ways that need more work to think about but are more effective", "To me yes" answering to "So they helped on the decision about new ways of promotion and new ways of sale?" and "I would have to find and we must find alternative solutions between sales promotions that can't systematically go through less 30, less 25, less 40 or less 50". This means that the study conducted in the company led both interviewees to think

about new ways of promoting the company's products instead of continuing to focus on the already used methods.

As a final question, we asked both interviewees to quantify the effects that the study done at the company had on their decision making process. We will analyse their answers using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) method which, as stated by Grisaffe (2007) is based on the question: how likely is it that you would recommend something to a friend or colleague?; using an evaluation from 0 to 10. Using the scale, answers from 0 to 6 are considered as "detractors", answers of 7 or 8 are considered as "passively satisfied" and answers of 9 or 10 are considered as "promoters". The NPS is the percent of promoters deducted of the percentage of detractors:

$$\text{NPS} = \% \text{ promoters} - \% \text{ detractors}$$

On the interviews, interviewee 1 gave us an evaluation but interviewee 2 divided between the actual scenario on the appliance of the study conclusions and the ideal scenario where the analysis would be already completed and with a thorough implementation. The answers are presented in table 7.

Table 7: Interviewees' evaluations

Interviewee	Actual Scenario	Ideal Scenario
Interviewee 1	8	8
Interviewee 2	[6 ; 7]	[8 ; 9]

Source: Own creation

Using the lesser number in the actual scenario: 6; and the higher number in the ideal scenario: 9; we get to possible NPS of -50% (detractor) in the actual situation and 50% (promoter) in the ideal situation. This difference verified between a detractor situation and a promoter situation is justified by interviewee 2 by the time lapse that made the process of implementation harder: "At this moment, and not because of the study, more because of the lack of time". Nevertheless, the perception on the study conclusions and its possible effects and the possible gain in competitive advantage is recognised by both interviewees: "in terms of methodology it's impeccable, in terms of the explication and analytical part as well." and "I honestly think that this is the type of work, what you



have done, that for the specific task of offer construction, the catalogue construction, it can change everything”.

Summing up the findings, we got to two unrelated results: marketing analytics should be used with an analytics approach; and the decision making process is a conjugation of both the data collected and treated plus a subjective component that we consider as experience. We also got to results that help us answer the research question which are: marketing analytics makes decisions easier and quicker; marketing analytics by enabling better informed decisions improves the quality of the decisions; marketing analytics enables the construction of the subjective component, experience, in decision making; and marketing analytics helps top deciders think about new marketing strategies.

## 5. Conclusions

The starting point to this work was the research question: What are the effects of applying Marketing Analytics practices as a support for the Top Management decision process? Having that in mind, the objective of study was clarified as to discover the concrete effects that applying marketing analytics techniques was in the companies' top deciders decision making process. Considering the growing importance of marketing analytics in the current world and being this a high growing field within marketing, we found that this study was relevant considering the impact that this evermore applied technique may have in the decision making process of top deciders in companies all over the world.

The literature review done on the subject help us have a clearer understanding of the topic and to identify effects that were already detected within past studies. Within the literature review we were able to create the study conceptual map were we could clearly see the relation between the relevant concepts of the study as well as the link that we aimed to study – the link between marketing analytics and the decision making process which will then influence the strategy defined for marketing and that can influence the marketing department as a whole.

In order to study the research question, a question with an explanatory nature, we defined the methodology to use. Having in mind the contributes and knowledge of Baxter and Jack (2008), Graham (2000), Stake (1995), Yin (2003) and mainly Yin (2009) we decided to follow a case study methodology, since we found that the Yves Rocher Portugal case was a good phenomenon to analyse using that methodology. After presenting the company and the project that was deployed there, we present the case study stages. After that, we needed to present the methods that we defined for collecting of data. Therefore, we presented and explained the four methods of data collection used: documentation, participant-observation, direct observation and interview. In this section of the study we highlighted the interview method since this was the main data collection source used. Consequently, we made a deep explanation of the method itself and presented the process that led to the creation of the interview guide used in the study. With the documentation we establish a basis on which to based our study and the

remaining sources allowed us to gather information on the effects that the marketing analytics technique had on the decision making process of Yves Rocher Portugal's top deciders.

On the next chapter we will present the final remarks on the results found during this study. Afterwards, we will present the contributions and implications of such results followed by the limitations of the study. To finalize this section, we will state considerations on the future research to be made on the topic at hand.

## **5.1 Final Remarks**

Besides confirming the effects already found in the literature and discovering two new ones, we also found some information during the data collection and treatment regarding which marketing analytics approach to follow and on what the decision making must be based. Next we present the results that were already displayed in the result section with some final remarks on each one.

### **Marketing analytics should be used with an analytics approach**

In the case study used for the study, the company's representative interviewed focused on the importance of having hypothesis defined prior to making the analysis. This means that when doing an analysis it is important not only to know the questions that we have but also the hypothesis that we intend to study, using the analysis to test our hypothesis.

### **The decision making process is a conjugation of both data collected and treated plus a subjective component**

The decision making process must consider not only a strong component of data and be based on the data collected, but also consider a subjective, personal component that we can consider as experience. This is clearly analyzed in the answers of interviewee 2 since the higher amount of years in the company enable the construction of the experience

related with the subject. This means that when making impactful decisions for the companies, its top deciders must be aware of the two composing dimensions on decision making: the objective component composed by the data collected and analyzed on the subject, and the subjective component composed by their personal feeling which is mainly developed with their experience on the subject.

### **Marketing analytics makes decisions easier and quicker**

Having a clear influence in the decision making process of a less experienced person, in this case interviewee 1, the deployment of marketing analytics techniques impacts decision making processes by making decisions easier to make since it helps to reduce doubts about the topics analyzed and quicker which is very connected with the fact that decisions are easier since by having less doubts, top deciders tend to make their decisions quicker.

### **Marketing analytics by enabling better informed decisions improves the quality of the decisions**

Both interviewees made references to this two effects: better informed decisions and decision quality improvement; and the participant-observation also helped us to identify this effect since before the end of the internship, some study conclusions helped the company's top deciders to make their decision making process on the subject a more structured one. Marketing analytics helps confirm certain suspicions or knowledge that top deciders have on the subjects analyzed by studying them. More important still is the fact that analyses done on a marketing analytics base help top deciders understand what not to do concerning the those topics, helping them when deciding to keeping apart from those situations. By enabling decisions to be made on a more informed base and turning the decision making process into a more structured one, marketing analytics improves quality of the decisions that are made.

### **Marketing analytics enables the construction of the subjective component, experience, in decision making**

Since the subjective component in decision making, experience, is constructed not only by the things we do but also by the studies that are made, marketing analytics by analyzing and studying concrete marketing situations helps top deciders build their experience, their feeling on those subjects increase the quality of the subjective component of their decision making process, indirectly effecting this way the top deciders decision making process.

### **Marketing analytics helps top deciders think about new marketing strategies**

By presenting new knowledge about the topics in study, marketing analytics helps top deciders to identify the need of thinking about new marketing strategies and adapt their marketing strategy to the constantly changing world. Therefore, by looking not only to the interviews inputs but also to the inputs given by the direct observation, we were able to conclude on the importance of marketing analytics not only to led Yves Rocher's top deciders to think about new strategies but also to better define some new ways already though before.

## **5.2 Contributions and implications**

In the phenomenon in study, the best marketing analytics approach to deploy was found to be the analytics approach. With this finding it becomes clear that when applying marketing analytics techniques, it is important that the top deciders have a clear prior understanding on the topic they expect to study. They should at the start of the study know what are their hypothesis, meaning that they should know what they are looking for and not perform the study with the intent of discovering what they want to find, accepting in the end the study conclusions, whether their hypothesis are validated or rejected by them.

As for on what the decision making process must be based, we found that it must be based on both data gathered and treated and a subjective component which we can call experience. It is clear to us at this point that when making decisions, top deciders of the company must consider not only the objective component of their decision making process concerning the data analysis made on the matter at hand, but also the subjective component which is normally related with their experience within the topic since it includes their feeling on the subject.

Regarding the effects that marketing analytics had on the decision making process, we confirmed the previously identified effects in the literature review: decisions are easier and quicker, an effect identified on the less experience interviewee; and decisions are made on a more informed base and therefore with higher quality. Besides confirming this effects, we were also able to two new effects. The first one is that marketing analytics and identical studies help constructing the subjective component of decision making since this feeling is based not only on the past things done but also in the studies that we access and read. The second one is that marketing analytics helps top deciders to think about new strategies since it presents new knowledge about the topics which gives guidance to top deciders on the need to look for new strategies and helps them adapt those strategy to the current situation of the studied topics. Summarizing the effects, it is noticeable the importance that marketing analytics has for less experienced decision makers. Conclusions got from the deployment of marketing analytics enable these decisions makers to construct their experience on the subject enabling them to make quicker decisions with ease. However, the benefits of deploying marketing analytics techniques are expandable to the more experienced top deciders as well. The application of such techniques enable top deciders to improve the quality of their decisions since they will be better informed on those topics. The information provided concerns not only what to do, but also what not to do which can be as important or even more important that the first insight. The fact that marketing analytics enables the development of the subjective component on the decision making process is also applicable to the more experienced top deciders since in the constantly changing world that we live today, all new information is important when making impactful decisions for the companies that they work for. The help that marketing analytics provides in the creative process is also applicable to both less and more experienced top deciders.

Having in mind this studies, they are capable of thinking about new innovative ideas that will help them overcome the challenges faced by their companies.

In conclusion, this study allowed us to confirm the clear existence of effects in the decision making process from the deployment of marketing analytics in company. The effects are not only concentrated in improving the quality and quickness of the decisions but also to contribute to innovative thinking in companies, meaning that the deployment of marketing analytics techniques constitutes a competitive advantage for the company that applies it. Also, by making such studies, top deciders from companies all over the world can increase their knowledge and understanding, their experience, on the topics at hand, transforming future decisions on the subject into easier decisions that are made faster than before.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

Despite the conclusions of the study and the contributions that were already mentioned, there are limitations to this study that we need to mention.

Firstly, we must refer the fact that this is a study based on the single case of the company Yves Rocher Portugal. As such, the findings of the study may not be totally verified within different contexts and companies.

Secondly, the fact that the study is focused on the case of Yves Rocher Portugal lead to a small number of interviewees which decreases the level of sustainability of the conclusions of the study.

Lastly, the translation of the interviews form Portuguese to English is also a limitation of the study since through the process of translation, some key notions and ideas can be partially lost or changed.

### **5.4 Future research**

After presenting the limitations of the study, is now important to present our understanding on future research that can be made concerning this topic. Consequently,

we believe that the knowledge on this subject would be more completed if conducted a study analyzing the implementation of marketing analytics techniques within a large numbers of different companies (business area and size for example). A study differentiating less experienced and more experienced decision makers, having a large amount of deciders as a basis, would also help improve the awareness on the topic especially if the findings for the two different type of top deciders where possible to compare.



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## Annexes

### Annex 1 – Interview Guide

In this annex we present the guide used in the deployed interviews performed to the top deciders of the company.

#### Interview Guide

##### **The effects of Analytical Marketing as a support to the decision making process: the Case of Yves Rocher**

Hello! My name is João Marinho and I'm a Master in Management student at FEP (Economics Faculty of Porto). Having the internship that I've done at Yves Rocher Portugal, that had the objective of studying the effects that several marketing criteria related with the construction of Yves Rocher's main sales instrument, the catalogue, have in its products sales, I'm doing my thesis project to finalize my Master studying the effects that studies as this one, analytical studies (marketing analytical in this case), have in the decision making process of top management deciders.

The interview is composed of open-ended questions since the objective is to get to know all your thoughts about the topic without any main idea to be confirmed or found. The objective of this interview is to find the effects and not to confirm several effects that we already have thought about.

First of all, I would like to ask you to present yourself (name, position at Yves Rocher and, if possible, the type of responsibilities/tasks that you have at the company).

Now I would like to make some questions on **general thoughts/ideas** that you may have regarding the **topic** that I'm studying within my master's thesis project.

- 1 - What do you consider as the areas of Marketing (area/division) operations?

- 2 - What are your thoughts about Marketing Analytics? What is the importance of it for companies?
- 3 - How does your Decision Making Process flows? How do you make decisions? (steps if possible)
- 4 - What is your level of trust on the information/knowledge produced by your employees? How does it affect your decisions?
- 5 - How do you think that analytical studies produced by others can influence a top decider as you when deciding on concrete and important issues of a company's routine?

We've now reached the **specific part** of this interview where we will be considering the study that was done.

**I would like to ask you to have those findings in mind when answering the following questions.**

**General Questions about the study:**

- 6 - What are the main findings that you got from the study? Is any of the information new to you?
- 7 - Did you ever thought about doing such a study? Why? How do you see this type of researches on the normal flow of a company as Yves Rocher?
- 8 - How important do you evaluate the information produced by the study for Yves Rocher's operations? At what degree do you see this findings influencing the company's workflow?
- 9 - What other subjects regarding sales would like to see analysed? Would you be able to pay for those studies?

**Specific Questions about the study (effects on the decision making process):**

- 10 - How did you used to decide about the criteria analysed on the study (price, discount rate presence, product visibility, Page products, etc.)? On what were your decisions based on?
- 11 - Do you consider that the findings of this study can influence that decision making process? How do you think it will influence/change that decision making process?

12 - Are you able to quantify the effects that the study had on your decision making process?

**(Questions depend on the interview flow; it is possible to had other questions based on the answers given)**

I would like to thank you for your availability for the interview. Your help has been crucial for the development of my Master thesis project.



## **Annex 2 – Transcription of interview 1**

### **1. What do you consider as the areas of Marketing (area/division) operations? (In the Yves Rocher context and general context)**

In the Yves Rocher context, in my case it has to do with the product, with basically the 4 Ps, because the fact that we use direct selling it doesn't mean that I don't have concerns about promotion, product positioning, that is, I'm not putting it on a shelf but in a certain part of the catalogue. I may not have a promoter at the shop entrance, but I can be, for example, in our B2B catalogue doing an offering of mini products and samples. So, just because we have a different channel, it doesn't mean that I don't have to be concerned about that. In my specific case, marketing is the 4 Ps. As for the company, we also have all the communication part. We have an entire brand to communicate and brand it is not product. The Yves Rocher brand also communicates also because it is true the sustainability concerns that it has. I don't know if the Doctor told you about the project that the brand has and the group at an international level: the Planton pour la Planète and the Terre de Femmes. It has to do with marketing, it has to do with sustainable development and it is evermore part of the company's DNA. We have in Portugal and other, a yearly prize for women that have projects in the sustainability area. Beside this, this is a Terre de Femmes project, another project has to do with the tree plantation not only throughout the year but also at specific periods, for example: the catalogue that is now for printing, which will start in June, it has a single part totally devoted to the topic where by buying a certain amount of products, the Yves Rocher foundation plants a tree. Furthermore, throughout the year certain products already fulfil that job: the Eco Label shampoo, the Pure Calendula and two products of the Pure Calmille. We also need to have marketing, but also more related with its communication side.

### **2. What are your thoughts about Marketing Analytics? What is the importance of it for companies?**

For me it's a daily task. Despite not being always available not only to do the analysis but to get to the conclusions, I can't be disconnected from that part for long. For example, every time I'm going to construct a catalogue I need to be aware on how we

are doing until then. I have, let suppose, a particular sales objective for that year, which naturally is divided through the several segments, like for example face care and makeup, and I'm not interested only in the global but mainly in the ones that we consider as the strategic ones. And I need to know, based on what I have as an objective, how I'm doing at the time to understand where the difference is, what may not be going so well and from there understand how I can get to the objective defined in the beginning. Without any analysis I won't get there. So, I need to know at any given moment how much I've done until then, how did I did it and understand what I need to do to reach what we compromise with the brand, with Paris for the year.

### **Importance of Marketing Analytics in any company?**

I think that is important in any company. We are not talking when it concerns cosmetics products. Any company that sells products needs to have that kind of analysis. I also think that service companies need to have a good marketing department, even to ensure coherence in the way things are made in all the departments, not only concerning communication, but also concerning all the existing supports. One example: I used to work in another company where I was the marketing responsible. It was a service company in the telecommunications sector and it also had, for example, a training department. It was necessary to ensure that all the supports that came for that department were in coherence with the rest of the company and the brand, not only regarding image but also in the texts itself. There were some rules that needed to be fulfilled.

### **3. How does your Decision Making Process flows? How do you make decisions? (steps if possible)**

On the analysis part, for what I was explaining you early on, I need to know where we are, I always need to have my objective in mind. Next, and here the Golden Rules also came to help a bit, at least by confirming certain suspicions, I know what are the segments that I can't never stop to lay an eye on and from then I think: I'll firstly start working this segments, what do I want to do with them to achieve this, especially in this catalogue. We have two ways of looking at the question: one thing is for me to know how much I have to do until the end of the year and in each one of them and it's like it

was a horizontal flow that in practice is not totally defined and is being done more catalogue to catalogue, that is like a vertical flow. But for the most important segments which are the ones that I work on first, I think: to reach this value, I will have to do this, this and that in the catalogue plus that in the B2B catalogue; to promote this product I have to put it on the right of the editorial or, for example, create a poster on a deader zone of the catalogue with a communication capable of making customer look at the product and therefore it is been created an area of bigger impact even if artificial because the strategy works as it has studied and we have been accompanying through the year. So, I always need to have in mind the analysis that were made, I need to know what I need to promote and then I think where am I going to promote it and all the rest comes later: the non-strategic things such as hygiene.

#### **4. What is your level of trust on the information/knowledge produced by your employees? How does it affect your decisions?**

The information, there is only one chance: it has to be reliable. So, there was a change not long ago, because we were doing the work on a way a little duplicated. That had also to do with the system itself, the PAL, which is being changed at the moment in order to respond better to our needs. For you to have an idea, a couple of years ago we didn't created the composed references. That, for example, the day cream plus the night cream, the CF's, once they started to exist, we had to classify it in some way for our analysis because it impact a lot and the way we had to analyse it was by unfolding it onto the excel by hand and that lead to many mistakes. And just recently our informatics colleagues were able to create a way to translate sales and values all divided in the system... that was a step. The second was me and Carla harmonized our documents according to our needs because Carla needs to do reports for finance and I need to do reports for myself, to general management and to marketing zone management and it didn't made sense for us to be analysing the same things but in different ways... we were both spending time. So, that part was harmonized. Today, Carla deals with the primary data, it stays all in tables and then we can go back and further. And that information needs to be accurate because if it's wrong, I'll make decisions that will lead me to other path.

**5. How do you think that analytical studies produced by others can influence a top decider as you when deciding on concrete and important issues of a company's routine?**

If we speak about the specific case of the Golden Rules, we have a particular question because this company has been doing catalogues for over 20 years and despite, throughout that time, it didn't have the confirmation that if we put things in a certain way they work, we have been doing it in a relatively intuitive way, because if we go to any magazine, the more expensive advertising is at the right of the editorial, that will be the most viewed page. What works for a magazine it will probably work for a catalogue too. What do I mean with this? When we are doing a study, we are analysing things that were put in a way, the word that I find is, inflated, despite not being what I'm trying to say. That is, we are not doing: if you look at a catalogue, things are not in a homogeneous way. What is at the places that we consider noble are the best products unless we are completely distracted or that we made a weak bet, probably well communicated, we hope, and with an offer that we consider as an attractive one. Now, why is it important the analysis that was made? Also to, not only to confirm, but also to understand what else can be done and something else that we were not seeing. One of the things that for me was very important to understand was that maybe in the noble parts we don't need to communicate discount. That the fact that we are already communicating a good product at a good price it's maybe enough. We don't need to be stamping with a percentage.

**6. What are the main findings that you got from the study? Is any of the information new to you?**

What we have just talked about, so, that the noble parts probably don't need to have a communication of the discount but something more qualitative and we can make them work by the communication of the price and the product benefits, which will lead us to a possibly cleaner catalogue on which we can put the discount part in a less visible section. And I also found interesting the part regarding the behaviour of the segments over the discount. So, deep down, the price elasticity of demand that was already a suspicion because different segments will not respond to different discount rates the same way. I also liked to confirm the conduct of "any 2 for X". The "any 2 for X"

works really well despite give us problems at the call centre, but that has nothing to do with the way that it's communicated in the catalogue. It has to do with the bills that the beauty councillors receive, where it isn't communicated that, it's communicated in a different way. And despite the fact that we are doing everything right, that part isn't completely clear. But is good to know that those type of dynamics work. One thing that I found interesting and that basically is being recovered but over a different form of communication, has the study that you made on the "Stop, Look and Buy" which was a way of making them stop every catalogue once with that communication and with the showing of a good opportunity for the beauty councillor, which ended-up being abolished in a maybe premature form, that is what we are doing this year by creating those posters with great opportunities. Essentially is making the best of less noble parts of the catalogues to put products that can sell good also and we do that with less noble parts like we do with noble parts because we end-up creating the idea that each time this appears, look, because it's really interesting and it can be a great opportunity for you.

#### **So they helped on the decision about new ways of promotion and new ways of sale?**

To me yes. It also confirmed that suspicion that we had. And I in the year 2013, the year that I joined the company, it was the year when the "Stop, Look and Buy" was made, it was something prior to me. It wasn't being well seen by the boss that thought it wasn't working. I still made some quick analysis and showing that yes, when we did it, on those products the presence rate increased, but at the time it was still decided to remove that component from the catalogue to then realize that it actually worked.

#### **7. How do you see this type of researches on the normal flow of a company as Yves Rocher?**

I think that this type of researches shouldn't be done only here. I think that they could also be made near the network but here we are talking not only about an analytical part but also a very qualitative part, where for example, we could join a group of beauty councillors give them the catalogues and try to understand by letting them talk about it the way they see it, how are they reading the catalogue, where are they looking, what is more interesting for them. So here it has not to do so much with the quantitative part, like dealing with sales, at least in a first stage, but we could later cross it with the sales

results of the catalogue. Let's imagine that we do it with for example 3 catalogues. They would be done differently in the way that we would put different segments in different spots of the catalogue and communicated in different ways. For example: one with discount, another with "any 2 for X" and other at standard price; and understand how that catalogue was viewed by the beauty councillors. Later join the same people and understand on they look at it and maybe a third time. And then analyse the results with the way the catalogue was done and with the inputs that the councillors gave. I think it would be something involving client marketing, communication marketing, client support service... I think it would be a study. The commercial direction, when we have it, all that.

**8. How important do you evaluate the information produced by the study for Yves Rocher's operations? At what degree do you see this findings influencing the company's workflow?**

The impact of this study was more for me personally, Carla and Liliana that also help me making the catalogue, a little bit to communication marketing, so Paula and the designers, and for the chief. It ends-up being a little bit limited to here but that was the objective. Mainly, it makes me never to forget what is really important and it also helped me to understand what not to do, even if sometimes it look very basic. The fact that after I've taken the study and despite not stating in one slide the Golden Rules, I've done what is called "cascading" on each slide. I ended-up doing, saying two or three slides for each conclusion I got from your study, that is, for example: this type of thing works better here, so what to do would be a second slide and then mainly what not to do. And what not to do for me can be as important as what to do because if I'm discussing what to do in each catalogue and Carla gives an idea that is related with what not to do, I'm already alerted: no, there is a study made that indicates that what is well done is this way and there was a time where we did other way, that is what she is suggesting, and it didn't have that type of result, it won't work. So, we are not going to repeat what is proven not to work. So no, sorry but that idea not here. Let's try another way. Therefore, it helps me have a line of thought much more right and the truth is that from two, three catalogues until now despite being delayed in the work, I've been able to do it in a more fluid manner. I have less doubts.

**9. What other subjects regarding sales would like to see analysed?**

To answer to that question, I would need more time to be able to think about what more could be analysed because to give you a very direct answer: yes, of course I would like to analyse everything; now, the everything is what I would need to think about what it is exactly and structure it, because I continue with the same time question. Even though recently I have been able to better organize the work, I still have that shortage of time to think about the big picture and then see now this needs to be analysed and then that. When I arrived I had a lot of analysis ideas and in the meantime those were lost because I needed to start working.

**10. How did you used to decide about the criteria analysed on the study (price, discount rate presence, product visibility, Page products, etc.)? On what were your decisions based on?**

Previously it has also done catalogue to catalogue, we were more afraid and loaded more on discount. Today we are running from that part and trying to find, trying to put other ways that need more work to think about but are more effective, namely those composed references. It is mainly that: be watchful doing better and running from the pure promotional model.

**11. Do you consider that the findings of this study can influence that decision making process? How do you think it will influence/change that decision making process?**

It changed. It made it quicker, even because I end-up having less doubts and I have less doubts regarding where to put things, how to promote and makes everything quicker.

**A more solid process, more structured?**

It's, but I'm still doing my path. I don't have it automatize by far and that has also to do with a certain experience lack that I still feel.

**12. Are you able to quantify the effects that the study had on your decision making process? (from 0 to 10)**

I have no clue. I would give it between a 7 and 8. And why? Because it helped me to make faster decisions, on the other hand I felt that I still don't have the all process closed. And there are some limitations to the study, but these have to do with the catalogue construction. It's studying the past and things that were done knowing that they would work. So, is not like it's a huge breakthrough. Now, in terms of methodology it's impeccable, in terms of the explication and analytical part as well. I would go for the 8.



## **Annex 3 – Transcription of interview 2**

### **1. What do you consider as the areas of Marketing (area/division) operations? (In the Yves Rocher context and general context)**

(of Yves Rocher marketing) There are a lot. All the communication part, also the offering construction part and in our case from sales promotion which is also very important which is clearly connected to catalogue creation, promotional implementation, etc. Is part of marketing functions all kind of intelligence, let's call it consumer intelligence which is to understand, through analyses, what is sold, why is sold, what is the efficiency of the measures that we apply... let's say, all the analytical part is fundamental.

Communication, sales promotion, analysis, customer intelligence... all this parts are important in our marketing.

Clearly a marketing function needs to complement two big areas that are: brand communication and sales promotion. And the third is: this got what results? Gives what results?; that is a very strong component of analysis, analysis normally post-hoc, after the things are made – what was given, what worked, what conclusions can we get, are we good or are we bad, something to review? Yes, what? Etc.

### **Creation of this new analytical area with the new technologies?**

It was always done historically. It has always present in all the marketing departments because it is all that are studies being regarding about customer behaviour, about mercantile paths, store movements, a catalogue in our case, merchandising... that has always existed. Probably nowadays is quite more developed because information treatment is more accelerated, easier. The big difference is that before there was less information, we worked that information, the few existing, at a slower pace, a less intensive pace, and nowadays with the existing information and technology it's easier to work, easier in the sense that working what we worked before is extremely faster, but the existing information and technology allow us to work many more things, meaning that it turns the entire thing into a more complex one and here lies the importance of knowing how to make equilibrium points, because if that doesn't happen a phenomenon

occurs, a frequent one, that is to explore information, to create information without knowing why... it isn't easy to create it, it's a little bit the current newspaper's phenomenon and digital information: as for the newspapers, before we had a single newspaper and we read it, we didn't have fifty sources of information. Nowadays we have a lot of information and it would be like saying – today is easier to read newspapers. No, today is harder to select and filter what is important. In marketing and analysis the same things are applicable: we have a lot of information about everything, the big challenge is to define what really matters. Maybe here it enters those new ideas of how to identify things... sometimes the challenge is what to do with all this information and how to separate what doesn't matter to me from what does.

## **2. What are your thoughts about Marketing Analytics? What is the importance of it for companies?**

When we talk about marketing analytics we are not talking only about a simple thing, simple language, we also talk about buying behaviour study, of studies that tell us what's the customers sensibility to price, what's the sensibility to communication and visibility. As I've said before, the catalogue isn't very different from a shop and we need to try to understand before going to promotional solutions, which can be a lot from simple and hard discount to composed offers, we need to know where we put things. From my knowledge, at a clothes store, for men for example, I don't remember seen three pairs of boxers appearing with a huge discount at the showcase, or shocks, or the things more... It's normally the suits, shirts, etc. And here, the question of what we show, where and why is fundamental. You never saw me saying that all the sales promotion inside a store isn't done over the entire product portfolio. This area is very important to tell us: what must be at the showcase, brand strategies also have protagonism of course, what must be inside and what are the promotional solutions more adequate. And marketing analytics can give us, with a marketing analysis, can give us a lot of information about many realities, it's not just about one or two, it's about a lot of realities that are interesting for us for decision making.

## **3. How does your Decision Making Process flows? How do you make decisions? (steps if possible)**

Not necessarily mine. I think that, in real life, if you're asked in the academic studies that may indicate that we will find the solution, using the analytical tools that we have, we will never find the solution, because reality is by proximity mutable. It's almost like football – what today is true, tomorrow is no more. The behaviour that today is standardize in customers, tomorrow will change to another one. So, I make decisions and I think that any senior executive with the minimal responsibilities can't... makes decisions based on the information that he gets, but also takes decisions, by being forced to it, with some instinct, some feeling. What instinct? Normally we define instinct and feeling as something... we think that is something more and less that is misunderstood what it's, but instinct and feeling are nothing more than experience. It's when we feel that, by virtue of learning that may be bigger or smaller, when we feel that in a way that we can't rationalize, explain with detail or prove, we think that certain thing is well-done or less well-done. In the crossing of these two things: experience, instinct, feeling with solid information; decisions are born of course. The process is not a linear one, but clearly this type of data, this kind of information is crucial. I would say that someone deciding based solely in sensations, in perceptions and based in I think of and opinions, but without information, risks to make bad decisions. Someone that only decides based on Cartesian information, structured, risks to have a line of thought that never changes, it's always the same and that may lead to some iluminism. So the decision process must result from the two things. Mine particularly, as in this moment I've to run several different and diverse realities that go beyond marketing, it isn't supported, it doesn't really has to do with marketing and sales promotion. It's clear that information, if I put myself in the place of a marketing director, I still have more and less the same opinion. The information of all the made studies give us guidance. It tells us a lot of times what not to do, what doesn't works, but what is a fact is that in marketing the studies may tell us that this or that solution work, whether is merchandising, whether is promotion, whether is pricing, but isn't safe, it never was, that since it continuously worked in the past and today, that it will keep on working. Then, I continue to think that in the decision process is important to exist information, it's fundamental, but that innovation also appears. I would say that in one way or another information is fundamental. To know what isn't working, which is one of the most valuable things, we need information. To know what is working, we need

information. To decide if we keep on doing what is working, we need information. To decide whether we are going to abandon this or that solution or if we are going to adapt it, we need information. I think that this kind of analysis, the kind of work you made, not only in that specific area but also applied to other marketing action reality is fundamental. Therefore I don't have here any specific phase of the decision making process. I think that it's in all the decision phases, not being the only decision making support source, there are others like strategy.

#### **4. What is your level of trust on the information/knowledge produced by your employees? How does it affect your decisions?**

I think that the level of trust, I think in a way a little bit different from what you're saying, in information will come less from the quality of the produced information. By definition, when certain responsibilities are delivered to employees either internal or external, we have to assume that the quality of what is produce is good. We can't afford to say: well, maybe it isn't that. It think that the most important of all this are the information construction assumptions. A lot of times these things fail because we have a perspective and an approach from the method and objectives' point of view that aren't very clear. Meaning, whether we want it or not, all the data mining processes and trying to find the assumptions to our questions must come from the assumption: I know what I want, I know what questions I have, I know the way how I'm going to make them, but the answer is what I don't know. Now, if we enter in this thinking: let's work the information and something will appear without us knowing really well what we are looking for, I personally consider that to be very wrong. Hence, more than the quality of the information and trust in that quality, I think we should question ourselves: the quality of the used methodology and if we have questions to be made. Example: You have done your work. We aren't sure, neither me nor you, that those catalogue subdivisions are right, but it's a fact to both of us that if we haven't made it we would still be talking about it. Dividing the catalogue by parts: noble parts, etc.; if we at least didn't knew to establish that methodology and if we would said: let's see the catalogue... the thing would be a lot more complicated. And our risk is being sailing seeing if we find anything curious. I think it's a little bit the difference between finding curiosities and finding the answers to the questions we have. We can have questions, we

must have them, it's fundamental. However it isn't sure that we have good answers or the answers we are expecting. Information serves to validate theories or hypothesis. Currently I'm reading a very interesting book about marketing and about: it's more and less about how to think on brand. And it's all done naturally either based on existing theories, like the segmentation theory, and that after through mathematical analysis will verify if the theories are valid or not. It's a fact that we always know what are the questions at start. If we know, then it's like this: numbers, numbers and numbers. Even you, if you think for a little while, if I told you: here are the catalogues, here is the information about them, see what you can conclude... you would be a little bit more lost than you were.

**Extra: What do you think that experience/feeling are in the decision making process? How do you think it appears? And can past analysis and information/knowledge that you accessed help creating it?**

What is the experience: is little or lot of work years. We all have experience. Naturally the studies that are made, the questions had, the conclusions gotten, make the experience. That's why I'm careful with the word feeling because feeling isn't instinct. I still think that is nothing more than accumulated experience and that we are making questions on our certainties. On one hand it helps us saying that according to everything I've already done, what I've experimented that worked or not, it seems to me that this or that solution, solution A or B, it's a solution or it may be a proper solution or a solution to be avoid. But also, experience helps us looking for new solutions because experience can tell us: ok, solution A, B, C and D are not good. Then, experience also tells us that we must try another, I need to find another. If we are unexperienced, if we have little feeling... we need to be extra careful with the word feeling, because many times this words reflect that I'm going to do what I want based on anything. When I use this words is based in years or many years of work. But just by themselves it's not enough for me, because if an experience is poorly built it won't serve.

**6. What are the main findings that you got from the study? Is any of the information new to you?**

I still didn't had the time to look at the study with the detail it deserves and where we invested our time, our money and your time, but from the talks that we had, from the material you left which has to be properly used, there were certain premises that were confirmed regardless of how obvious it might seemed from the start, which is the fact that, this may seem a bit basic but clearly visibility is a critical sale factor which confirms nothing more than the feeling that what is not seen, hardly is sold. Visibility is therefore critical in the sale process. But there are, as an example, other things that weren't so obvious: the explicit discount is so important or not? And, as you remember, there are high visibility areas in our catalogue where the discount is not as important, it's fixed. Is much stronger that the product is visible than the discount, which are the central pages for example. It was clearer to us, that are applying it, that there is, despite all the pages being equal, and if we divide the catalogue in four quadrants, or four quartiles: the first, the second, the third and the fourth aren't worth the same and this as at least contributed to, although I think that we are still taking little advantage of the study, but it's obvious that this has already given us some guidance: that, for example, when we have strategic lines and segments of sale, we have to cross with the study conclusions and put the strategic lines and segments in the most valuable quadrants, which for example nowadays we are applying in certain segments but we clearly defined the skin care, or the brand defined, the skin care, the make-up and capillaries as the three brand strategic segments and these segments as much as possible, despite being different, must always be sold at the first and second quadrants, regardless of the specific visibility places: at the middle, counter cover, etc; so yes, we are already applying or using certain conclusions from your study. My feeling is that we need more, because the study gave us clues that need to be deepened and now we need to, in a firmer way, take the teachings from your study conclusions so that we can apply them in the real life.

**Summary: Confirmation of some information, some feelings that experience had been showing?**

There are things that were confirmed, other were undermined, there are things that, for example, it's curious: from the moment we saw that the discount might not be because the repetitive discount or the repetitive and explicit discount rates necessarily lead to a

less high perception on the brand quality. So I would have to find and we must find alternative solutions between sales promotions that can't systematically go through less 30, less 25, less 40 or less 50. And in the first catalogue of the year, catalogue 1, you were still here, we also adopted other solutions: the posters, a double page of great visibility where the discount, the percentage is not a very visible thing, I think rarely. And the principle of, and this was based in one thing: if the product has strong visibility, we don't need to take 40%, 50% or 60% because by nature that can be communicated from another way, without ruining the perceived brand quality. Yes, I consider that we are applying things. Now, what I think is that we can do more, like always: there are tools, there is information, etc. to see a lot of things and here lies the modern times drama: since there is a lot to see, we aren't capable... we always have the idea that there is a lot to do. It's a little like there is much to read in the internet. We can assimilate half percent or one per thousand of what exists in the internet or in our personal internet and we also have the feeling that there are a lot more things, a lot more things to read that we can enjoy.

## **7. How do you see this type of researches on the normal flow of a company as Yves Rocher?**

I see them as being extremely important with one condition and we're back at the start: studies for studies that aren't targeted are worthless. They're nothing more than curiosities from which someone may have the luck of getting one or another useful conclusions but even that is questionable. These type of studies are fundamental when organizations and deciders make questions for which they don't have answers and when they know there are a lot of answers or at least some clues may be given looking onto the existing information and conducting these type of investigations. This is, having work hypothesis and saying: ok, here isn't fundamentally worthy to appreciate of my opinions feelings if non-argued or non-proven, when it's possible to have someone that will verify all the work hypothesis through more or less complex analysis. Nowadays, I think it no longer makes sense in lots of things being ready to speak from your mind, let's say it like this, so I see it with good eyes but always with a basis that people know what they want before the studies start. It isn't that they know what they want to conclude. They have work hypothesis and they want to validate them. And in the end

they should humbly accept that their hypothesis are confirmed or non-confirmed by the results. But I think I'm not giving any novelty.

### **9. What other subjects regarding sales would like to see analysed?**

Not specifically in marketing. Of course there is. Look, our day to day is made of many or few work hours according to perspective: to everything that we can do, this is there is a lot of things for us to learn, to do, to try, to change, to correct and time is scarce.

Therefore, there are always for sure areas, being in sales as in marketing, that deserve to be studied with higher detail. But and why? When there are a lot of questions, there are necessarily a lot of analysis to do or is possible to do. But not only in marketing and so in sales, this is in catalogue management, we have tens of thousands of salesman and if you think that they're all different or they're all transversal in terms of culture, in terms of formation, in economic terms, in terms of earnings, in geographical terms, it's also possible to see there with higher detail and place work hypothesis that today we think of but with studies we may have opinions a little bit more sensible and reasoned. For example: does in areas with less populational density, a 20 years old seller, young, sells the same as the same seller in other place, in an urban area such as Lisbon or Porto? Does the youngest sells more and better the same type of products than the 35 or 60 years old lady? Does the factor time in the organization counts or not? When is the income of our sellers/clients higher? In the first three months? What are the retentions? The retention rates? What's the retention curve? As you can see, there are n questions to be made and these studies are very important. This is no longer marketing analysis, this is business analysis. It's channel analysis.

These are analysis that can be crossed. The interesting in this is that they can be crossed. Because life it isn't... Life and businesses don't work by ethical divisions, realities cross among each other's. But to answer to your question: yes, there are. The more complex an organization is, there more areas there is to study, namely is the area of products of grand consumption or current consumption. There is always questions to put, there is always analysis or studies to make.



**10. How did you used to decide about the criteria analysed on the study (price, discount rate presence, product visibility, Page products, etc.)? On what were your decisions based on?**

I think that there wasn't any revolution. It would be absurd from my part to say that before we did things in a way and now we do it in a different way. I think is that the decision making process about location, price, discount, this is promotion, etc. are now more solid or less fragile, according to the perspective.

**More rational?**

Not exactly more rational because we by the fact that we don't have information it doesn't mean that we are irrational. We can have is either better or worse quality information. But clearly this help and I've already mentioned you this. It helps us to structure, to have a more structured line, more grounded, about the way we want to connect the brand strategy with the act... and strategy, by definition, isn't something that happens in a month, or a week, or a catalogue in this case. It's something that normally is a little bit more stable. Of course it can change over a year but supposedly if it goes well lasts 4, 5, 6 years. How do you connect this background plan, strategy, with the current acts, the mercantile acts, the decision making? Your study for example it helped us a lot in terms of the place (where/what), in terms of promotion, price (which/why), in terms of the union of these things with the strategy that is: what do we want strategically in terms of the big segments or the segments that we have. Therefore, today we are clearly better than what we were 7 months ago. Now, are there more things to do? So many. Is there more advantage to take of the study? Yes, a lot more. Of course, if we say, as you know: we need to make a rule book, a small rule book... What are the n fundamental principles or the n fundamental conclusions that we got from the study? That part isn't done yet because is more... by definition for example golden rules can be many. If there were 500 golden rules we would all be happy. No, the golden rules are half a dozen. Did we get to them? No. We have got a lot of conclusions, we have a lot of data, we have a lot of leads, but have we got to the golden rules? Not yet. Some are really golden that is, and even if it looks absurd from an academic perspective, but it's necessary to say the obvious that is: let's put the important products in the places of great visibility. This is a golden rule. It's worth a lot

of money. Why is this important even if it looks like something from the common sense? A lot of time it isn't clear neither proven anywhere that a product in page 100, 90, 2, 3 or 7 that has incomes basically different. Normally, when these golden rules are established, some basic... the golden rules may be positive or negative. The positive are: do this. And the negatives are: let's avoid that. When those aren't written, aren't proven, aren't documented, there is always the tendency to approach these things as: it's more or less discounted, because... and there is an almost unconscious thing that tells us: ok, if it has 40%, if it has 50% discount it will sell and it might not be like that. By contrast I would say that, also saying that is almost the obvious, if one thing has the discount and the other doesn't have the discount visible, it looks obvious that the one that has the discount visible, less 50%, will sell more. No, it isn't obvious. It isn't like that, the reality isn't that, exactly that. Verifying certain situations, as you know: if it's in the middle, for example, in the center; but if it's in another place for example it already matters. So, yes we are taking, we are applying things. It's still lacking applying a lot more.

## **12. Are you able to quantify the effects that the study had on your decision making process? (from 0 to 10)**

At this moment, and not because of the study, more because of the lack of time, I would say that if we were at the ideal world, if we could stop reality, if we could focus about the study conclusions and taking additional conclusions, probably in a scale from 0 to 10 we would be at an 8 or 9. Since we are in the real life, the deadlines don't stop, the days keep on passing, at the moment, my perception is that we are in a 6 or 7, but not because of the study. Its fault of the time that is limited and scarce from us all. You have left 3 or 4 months ago and we still couldn't manage to get time, moreover because we had a lot of confusion here: absenteeism, people gone sick, some broke their foot, other were operated, etc. This created a context of lack of time. But I honestly think that this is the type of work, what you have done, that for the specific task of offer construction, the catalogue construction, it can change everything and for that reason I say that it can be an 8 or 9. In practice, it changed or not? It still hasn't changed due to a lack of time, but still I've told some details where today we are already seeing, I at least

am already seeing the catalogue in a different way, because of the study. And so the 6 or 7.